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STATE TERRORISM AND THE DEATH SQUAD:

A STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON

William Anthony Lavelle

B.S., California State University, Sacramento, 1983

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of  
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

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at

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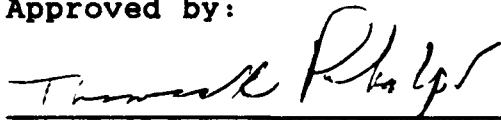
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A STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON

A Thesis

by

William Anthony Lavelle

Approved by:



\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Thomas R. Phelps



\_\_\_\_\_, Second Reader  
James M. Poland

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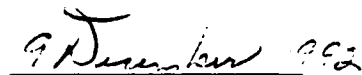
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Thomas R. Phelps, Graduate Coordinator

Department of Criminal Justice

  
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ABSTRACT  
of  
STATE TERRORISM AND THE DEATH SQUAD:  
A STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON  
by  
William Anthony Lavelle

Statement of Problem

Regimes around the globe are conducting wholesale homicide of its citizens. The problem is widespread. Presently, this form of State sanctioned terrorism is the policy of at least thirty countries. Over the previous fifteen years at least two million have been extrajudiciously executed; and there is little evidence the situation has improved. The causality of death squads stems from government response to challenges (perceived or real). Frequently regimes reinterpret the challenge as being directed towards the state, justifying the use of any means at the disposal of the government. The most direct plan of action in response is to put these countries under concentrated public scrutiny, compelling them to abolish their death squad or face sanction.

There is a need to advance this issue in all forums--especially criminal justice.

### Sources of Data

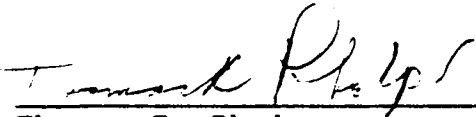
The data for the thesis was obtained from an extensive review of the relevant literature taken from scholarly research, periodicals, books, popular articles, and writings published by the alternative press that deal with specific areas in the field of state terrorism, i.e., extrajudicial executions, death squads, torture, "disappearances," genocide, and torture victim rehabilitation. Information was examined largely from the fields of Criminal Justice, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, as well as the documented investigations conducted by human rights organizations, for an overall insight of the various factors affecting the death squad phenomenon. Furthermore, first hand testimony was included from individuals who have had contact with squad members or their victims, and testimony of surviving victims. The analysis conducted on all information gathered has been disseminated throughout the various chapters of this thesis.

### Conclusions Reached

Death squads have a long history dating back to the beginnings of organized government. There is nothing to counter the conclusion that death squads will remain a viable



policy choice of many governments. Their methods of operation--torture, "disappearances" (see definitions, chapter 1), murder, and genocide--will continue unchallenged. Human rights groups have attempted in vain to raise the world conscience to the death squad phenomenon. Criminal justice organizations with international membership have not loudly condemned state terror conducted by member nations. Scholarly research is lacking on the specific death squad phenomenon. Moreover, research by the criminal justice community is nil.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Thomas R. Phelps

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those who have suffered at the hands of tyranny, and, to all the mothers in the world who have lost sons and daughters to death squads.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The cooperation, assistance, and counsel of a number of individuals were invaluable in the development of this thesis, and my sincere appreciation is extended to each of them:

Dr. Thomas R. Phelps, for prompting me to take on this project, a necessary subject to be raised in the criminal justice community.

Dr. Jim Poland, for his counsel, wisdom, and patience as the second reader of this thesis.

Ms. Cosette Thompson, Director, San Fransico Office, Amnesty International, for her invaluble advice and concern in helping me wade through the mounds of data at her disposal; and, her desire to see this undertaking completed.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

I will send forth my terror before you, and I will throw into panic all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn tail before you... I will drive them out before you little by little, until you have increased and possessed the land.'

\* \* \*

Tonita is a peasant from Santa Lucia, a rural village near the volcano of San Vicente in El Salvador. One day in 1988, she brought lunch to her husband and sons cutting firewood in a forest near her village. She had left her three smallest children--an eighteen month old and five year old daughter, and a three year old son--in the care of her sister and mother. On her return home later in the afternoon, as she approach her house, she sensed something was wrong. Tonita hurried forward. She dropped the fire wood she had carried home. Entering the house, Tonita was greeted by the grisly spectacle of a feast macabre.

Seated around a small table in the middle of her house were her mother, sister, and three little children. The decapitated heads of all five had been placed in front of each torso, their hands arranged on top, as if each body was stroking its own head. The hand position had proven difficult in the case of the baby daughter. The difficulty had been overcome by nailing her hands onto her head. The hammer had been left on the table. The floor and table were awash in blood. In the very center of the table was a large plastic

bowl filled with blood; the air hung heavy with its sweet, cloying smell.

Tonita's neighbors fled when the Salvadoran National Guard began the killing. The Guardia did not try to stop the people from fleeing, and indeed, they encouraged it. The Guardia killed Tonita's family. Why? Were they "under orders"? Does the Salvadoran government condone the beheading of an 18-month old infant? That group of soldiers had orders. Their purpose that day was to strike terror in Tonita's village. Fear that if the villagers opposed the state, a squad of soldiers--the death squad--would come for them.

Governments around the world engage in sanctioned political terrorism everyday. "It is drama of the highest order. Violence, death, intimidation, and fear are its ingredients."<sup>1</sup> Political killings by governments is the greater genre of which death squads are a unique part. This century alone has witnessed numerous purges by post revolutionary governments other than the institutionalized systems of terror that developed under Stalin and Hitler. Recent history has documented many cases of enormous massacres amounting to genocide: Indonesia, Chile, Kampuchea, Equatorial Guinea, and many other places. All those millions of extrajudicial executions stand as overwhelming empirical evidence that state violence is a standard operating procedure of numerous contemporary regimes. And the death squad is the modern instrument with which governments carry out that policy.

This thesis will attempt to describe for the reader what all this turmoil means. The premise should give one a greater sense of understanding of the entire phenomenon. What kind of environment must exist to stimulate policy makers to use death squads? How can a human being be part of a team inflicting such cruelty on his fellow citizens and then go home to his family and lead a "normal" life. And what of the victims? Who are they and why were they chosen? The primary reason this researcher considers this subject an important criminal justice issue is because most societies look upon individuals who torture and murder children and parents as criminals. While on the contrary, those who engage in the very same actions under state sanction are not so defined. Most in the criminal justice community know of death squad activity only from the media, but this research should instill a much deeper understanding of the dilemma.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem is almost too simple. Regimes around the globe are conducting wholesale homicide of its citizens while simultaneously currying favor from the developed nations. The problem is widespread. Presently, this form of state sanctioned terrorism is the policy of choice in at least thirty countries around the world. Over the previous 15 years at least two million have been extrajudiciously executed; and there is little evidence to suggest that the situation has

improved.' The causality of death squads stems from government response to challenges (whether perceived or real) from specific groups. Frequently regimes reinterpret the challenge as being directed towards the state itself, which, they argue, justifies the use of the state's legitimate monopoly of violence in self-defence. Although such human rights violations are condemned in public by the world forum as a whole, in private the United States and other major powers continue to support regimes using death squads. Many governments holding seats in the United Nations, who are signers to the Helsinki Accord on Human Rights, and even member nations of Amnesty International, sponsor state terrorism. The most direct plan of action in response to this hypocrisy is to put these countries under concentrated public scrutiny, compelling them to abolish their death squads for fear of economic and other forms of retribution. This topic is extremely important because people are being murdered by police and military obedient to their government, even as you read this. There is a need to advance this issue in all forums--even criminal justice.

#### Purpose of the Study

The desired effect is that this study will raise the consciousness of the reader to this problem. Another intention is to illustrate the overall theme by studying the processes and action of death squads as well as to show their

current level of activities. It should be a topic of interest to criminologists because of the use of torture and homicide upon people in opposition to a government, and some of these very same governments are member nations in international criminal justice organizations.

### Need for Study

This study is necessary in order to provide a deeper more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Armed with this knowledge, hopefully, the reader will take a proactive stance whenever and wherever this issue is discussed. Even better would be to use this study as a catalyst for scholarly research by criminal justice professional organizations that have affiliations with countries engaged in state terrorism. And, to raise this issue in all criminal justice forums. Selected countries will be examined with emphasis on their political climate and actions in regard to death squad activity within their borders. This undertaking is significant in that there is limited research on the specific topic of death squads. Moreover, this subject has not been addressed at length in any criminal justice publication. Scholarly discussion still appears to move overwhelmingly in the direction of studying only insurgent or revolutionary terror. The reader will learn there exists a terrible travesty in the world, ordered by governments, carried out by

its law enforcement and military, and ignored by the criminal justice communities of developed nations.

### Scope and Limitations of the Study

In order to understand how men, women, and children can be tortured and murdered as a matter of government policy, it is important to examine the political environment, the factors prompting policy makers to take such decisions. This study will survey the procedures by which regimes employ death squads as an extension of national policy. Also explored will be the individuals (death squad members) who conduct torture and executions. And, too, victim selection and rehabilitation will be reviewed. Unfortunately, some opposition groups use the very same tactics. Their actions, also, will be observed.

This researcher has decided to approach the subject by examining it in three main points: First, governments, what is the history of state terrorism and the climate and factors prompting policy makers to include death squads as national policy. Second, the squad members themselves; how does one become a member? How are they trained? How and where do they perform torture and murder? And finally, the victims. How are they selected and why? What do they have to say about their experiences? In addition, for those who do survive, what rehabilitation sources are available to help them recover? Subsequent chapters will scrutinize the process and actions of the phenomenon and illustrate, using case

histories, several countries currently employing death squads. Also in the discussion will be other associate issues of relevance to the main topic. Other points reviewed, limited primarily to their relationship to the death squad phenomenon, will include but not be limited to torture, disappearances, and genocide.

### Methodology

The data for this thesis will be obtained from an extensive review of the relevant literature taken from scholarly research, periodicals, books, popular articles, and writings published by the alternative press that deal with specific areas in the field of state terrorism, i.e., extrajudicial executions, death squads, torture, "disappearances," genocide, and torture victim rehabilitation. Information will be examined largely from the fields of Criminal Justice, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, as well as the documented investigations conducted by human rights organizations, for an overall insight of the various factors affecting the death squad phenomenon. Furthermore, first hand testimony will be included from individuals who have witnessed death squad activity or interviewed victims of death squads and torture. The analysis conducted on all information gathered will be disseminated throughout the various chapters of this thesis.

### Definitions

The following definitions of terms will be used in this thesis. These specific terms, as they relate to this study, will be used to enhance the clarity of this research.

**DEATH SQUAD:** Can generally be described as a nominally autonomous band of vigilantes, members of the state's military, para-military, or police units, or civilians controlled by military or police personnel, who kidnap and murder without any possibility of redress. Some teams operate directly under some form of government chain-of-command while others do so independently. Still other squads are hired by private parties for acts of terrorism on specific victims.

**TERRORISM:** It has been defined a hundred ways. Webster's dictionary gives the elements: the use of terror, violence, and intimidation to achieve an end; fear and subjugation produced by this; a system of governments that uses terror to rule.

**(THE) STATE:** The dictionary definition is the supreme public power within a sovereign political entity. But for this study a more prudent definition comes from the founder of modern sociology, Max Weber, who defined the state as that human community, which, within a given territory claims for itself the legitimate monopoly of physical violence.



STATE (OR STATE SANCTIONED OR POLITICAL) TERRORISM: It may be viewed as the more precise and deliberate act of inflicting harm on an individual or group in order to change the nature of their behavior and instill fear in other individuals or groups. State terror is a more direct method of behavior modification that seeks a more direct effect.

EXTRAJUDICIAL: Outside of the authority of the state criminal justice system and due process of law.

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION: This term has been coined in the last ten or fifteen years to consolidate certain acts of state terrorism under one general definition. It is the phenomenon of government sanctioned murder generally carried out by death squads. These executions are committed outside the judicial process and in violation of national laws and international standards forbidding the arbitrary deprivation of life. It is an unlawful and deliberate act: this distinguishes it from accidental killings and from deaths resulting from the use of reasonable force in law enforcement. The term also separates those homicides from the category of killings in war not forbidden under the international laws that regulate the conduct of armed conflicts. The victims are selected because of their political beliefs or activities, religion, color, sex, language or ethnic origin.

**DISAPPEARANCES:** The common death squad action of extrajudiciously arresting or kidnapping an individual or individuals of any age or sex, without explanation or probable cause, with the conclusion usually resulting in torture and eventual execution of the victim. Generally, no records are made nor are any family members notified as to the status of the "disappeared." Victims are denied all basic human rights as well as the right to due process of law. Amnesty International (AI) considers that a "disappearance" has occurred whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person has been taken into custody by the authorities or with their connivance and the authorities deny that the victim is in custody.

**TORTURE:** Used quite frequently by death squads as standard operating procedure, torture is the infliction of severe physical pain as a means of punishment or coercion.

**GENOCIDE:** The systematic, planned annihilation of a racial, political, or cultural group. The United Nations defines it as a number of acts, including killings, committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, whether in peacetime or during a war.

### Organization of Remainder of Study

The remaining chapters of this thesis will be composed of the following information: Chapter Two contains an in-depth review of the literature, to include books, periodicals, newspaper articles, government documents, publications, briefings, documented investigations, and testimony in the sphere of state terrorism, government repression and violence, death squads, torture, human rights, and torture victim rehabilitation. The focus will be in three general categories--the state, the death squad, and finally, the victims of state terrorism. Chapter Three contains an examination of the strategy taken against victims, and how death squads carry out their operations using case studies of Sri Lanka and El Salvador, two countries presently identified as using death squads. And finally, Chapter Four includes a summery as well as this researcher's conclusions and recommendations.

Be forewarned, in discussing such a gruesome subject, the material may include graphic details of torture and human suffering which may alarm the reader. Hopefully, that consternation will lead to support for organizations fighting state terrorism and the death squad.

## NOTES

1.Exodus 23:27.

2.Michael Stohl, ed., The Politics of Terrorism (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1983).

3.Amnesty International, Amnesty International Report: 1991 (New York: Amnesty International, 1991).

Chapter 2  
Literature Review  
Introduction

The one means that wins the easiest victory over reason:  
terror and force. - Adolf Hitler

\* \* \*

Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed by the political authorities in their countries in the past two decades. The deaths continue. Day after day, security forces, death squads, and government assassins are implicated in these deliberate, unlawful killings. Well-known political figures have been publicly assassinated; elsewhere whole villages have been wiped out, and the news has not reached the outside world for weeks or months, if at all. Often the victims belonged to the political opposition--often they were simply members of a particular ethnic group or lived in an area targeted for security operations (such as Tonita's village).

Political killings by governments, executions by death squads, have certain common features. These are summed up in the definition that Amnesty International (AI) uses:

The unlawful and deliberate killings of persons by reason of their real or imputed political beliefs or activities, religion, other conscientiously held beliefs, ethnic origin, sex, color or language, carried out by order of government or with its complicity.'

In examining the death squad, most governments do not openly advertise the atrocities practiced by the police and

military in their countries. Occasionally, someone will step forward and give direct testimony from the inside. As a sample, the interview with a former Khmer Rouge cadre pries the lid off a little to allow a look inside.

In the beginning only officers' families were killed. At the beginning of 1976, however, the families of common soldiers were also killed. One day at Choeung Prey, I cried for a whole day on seeing women and children killed. I could no longer raise my arms. Comrade Saruoeun said to me: 'Get on with it.' I said: 'How could I? Who can kill women and children?' Three days later I was arrested, in June 1976.'

This thesis is designed as a descriptive study of the various aspects of death squads as one phenomenon of state terrorism. Hopefully, this effort will aid in an increased awareness of the problem and motivate further study and advocacy by the criminal justice community. What follows in this chapter is an examination of the literature relevant to this undertaking. For one to fully grasp the main topic, first it is important to be familiar with what is being said regarding the use of terror by governments. State terrorism is not a modern phenomenon. Writers have discussed several key events on which regimes down through history have built justification for violating the human rights of the population.

### State Terrorism: History

What is the precedent for governments which choose as a policy the use violence and repression? State terrorism, of which the death squad is a component, is a different subject

not fully recognized by the general public. It is increasingly accepted among scholars that it is inappropriate and misleading to use the term "terrorism" solely in cases where the behavior in question is carried out by some non-state organization (such as the Irish Republican Army or the Red Army Faction) against a government, its agents, or the general citizenry of the state.

From an historical perspective, the literature review clearly points out that political terrorism is not a modern occurrence. All of the great civilizations established since the beginning of organized human societies have practiced some form of state terrorism. Studying a sample spanning the last two hundred years, the idea of a reign of terror is commonly presumed to have emerged during the French Revolution. One of the earliest well researched cases of political terrorism was the horror which was inaugurated by the revolutionary government of France on September 5, 1793.' Known as the "Jacobin terror," it lasted only until the following summer. It was sanctioned by a National Convention which had been elected to give France a constitution, and organized by committees appointed to ensure national security while foreign troops and domestic rebellion threatened. Justified in the name of the sovereign people and declaring that terror was the official policy of the state, the dread was rooted in the fears and suspicions of that people and made them its victims. In the course of the terror, some 500,000 of the 25 million

citizens of France were jailed as political suspects. Over 15,000 of these were condemned to death and 12,000 more were executed without trial.' Uncounted thousands died in the prisons of the new republic.

The use of death squads was the instrument of the French national policy. To carry out the mandate of the state afield, the convention selected deputies as special representatives on mission for the French government. Some were dispatched to the centers of rebellion. There they purged local administrations, besieged rebellious towns, and directed the torture of defeated rebels. At the town of Nantes, hundreds of rebels were drowned on the orders of one of these deputies; hundreds more were shot in front of mass graves dug at Lyons.

The early nineteenth century saw the rise of the Zulu empire encompassing almost the entire Southern half of Africa. The state, like most African kingships of the time, was a limited monarchy lasting from about 1816 to 1840 under one ruler--Chaka Zulu. Through a series of tribal wars killing over one million, it is estimated that by 1820, Chaka's one hundred thousand warrior army had deprived some three hundred chiefdoms of their independence.' As absolute ruler, Chaka had committed himself to a policy of military terrorism, from which he never wavered. His troops are believed to have tortured and slaughtered two million people.' Walter's



research indicated the means of killing by Chaka's army varied:

Strangling seemed to be reserved for royal persons, and sometimes warriors could claim death by the spear in preference to more lowly forms. For the rest, victims were dispatched by dislocating the neck, clubbing, stoning, various mutilations, or pounding sharpened stakes through the rectum.'

To enhance his despotic power, Chaka struck at the primary loyalties of kinship ties and personal attachments, not permitting those sentiments to compete with the total loyalty that he demanded of his people. Men were sometimes forced to kill their own children and in turn were killed if they showed any reluctance or remorse. Walters wrote of a british explorer who witnessed one such act:

In ordering any of his subjects to be killed, Chaka never gave his reason for consigning them to death until it was too late to recall the sentence of execution. A sign, given by the pointing of his finger, or by the terrible declination of his head, was promptly obeyed, and as promptly executed, by anyone present. Thus, a father did not hesitate to be the executioner of his own child.'

On September 22, 1828, Chaka Zulu's terror state died with his assassination.

Even the United States was not immune to committing acts of terror by the state. In 1877, the Seventh Cavalry under General Armstrong Custer, was engaged in a search and destroy mission against the Lakota Souix indians led by Chief Crazy Horse. At Little Big Horn, based on incorrect intelligence, Custer planned to engage Crazy Horse's estimated two hundred braves. Most know the outcome. Over two thousand indians killed every member of Custer's force. Faced with such a

humiliating defeat, the U.S. Army embarked on a campaign of rounding up all "renegade" indians. Several major battles were fought it what became know as the "great Indian war." In some cases whole tribes were slaughtered because they "resisted pacification." The finale occurred in 1899 in Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Elements of Custer's former seventh cavalry, hunting for "wild indians," surrounded a group of two hundred Lakota Souix. In less than one hour, the solders murdered every man, woman, child, and baby in that group. They then buried the carnage in an unmarked open pit grave. Several of the solders who participated were subsequently decorated for their actions.

The beginning of the twentieth century, Albert Camus suggested that our lifetime is the century of fear. He wrote:

...who can deny that we live in a state of terror? ... To emerge from this terror, we must be able to reflect and to act accordingly. But an atmosphere of terror hardly encourages reflection. I believe, however, that instead of simply blaming everything on this fear, we should consider it as one of the basic factors in the situation, and try to do something about it. No task is more important.... And if an atmosphere of fear does not encourage accurate thinking, then one must first of all come to terms with fear.'

This century from its first decade is littered with accounts of state terror. With the October 1917 revolution sweeping across the Soviet Union came the failed experiment in governing in the "perfect workers state." One of the most revealing products of communist theory is the "Document of Terror." A copy had been smuggled out of the Soviet Union and reprinted by Radio Free Europe in the early 1950,s. It

establishes a foundation for the use of terror by the communist state to control its citizens. What follows are some key excerpts:

The weapon of terror is violence. In order to achieve one's aim by means of violence, and to obtain the planned results, violence must be applied at the proper time, in the proper strength, and in the proper form. The proper form is that which will have the most damaging psychological effect on the object.... And the object of terror is the entire people, and within the people, every class or ...or group of opponents. In the structure of general terror the executors are the elite. The entire population must be subjected to terror in order to establish the conditions for the destruction of one part of the population. Whoever is not in the ranks of terrorists is either an actual or potential opponent. The analysis has shown that general terror makes it possible, one fine stroke, to destroy the leading group of the terror object, to cripple the masses, and impose the will of the terror subject (the state)."

The "Document of Terror" also eludes to death squads in its description which it calls "direct actions" by organs of the state. That is, the use of police and military to terrorize:

The conditions for direct action by the open organs of the state exist in a case where either the opponent had been unmasked and identified and failure appears to be impossible, or where the opponent's support point has been discovered... and the extent of the action demands unequivocally the terror organ's open appearance on the scene (of opposition activity). The structure of general terror not only permits, but even forces, mass arrests and raids. Statistical reports on such actions are always impressive."

Little known, but perceived as being dangerous and "inflammatory," are the works of a few writers and theorists who preached fascism as the wisest course for governments to effect control of the opposition. The Italian, Sergio Panunzio, who was to serve under Mussolini for the major part

of his life as the principal ideologue of Fascism, put together a rationale for political violence. The first Fascists felt compelled by moral and pragmatic considerations to articulate a rationale for political violence as ancillary to their revolutionary enterprise. By the time Panunzio published his work Defense of Violence in 1921, Fascism had fanned out across Italy. And the subsequent violence it carried throughout the country set the stage for Mussolini's succession to power. Panunzio wrote what was clearly advocated was state terrorism: the use of severe sanction or deadly force against innocents for the express proximate purpose of bending others to the state's will. The difference between Mussolini's Fascists and, (what they called) terrorists is that while Fascists may have undertaken such acts as kidnapping or executing innocents, those acts were understood, by their own standards, as prima facie criminal.

Various aspects of modern political terrorism were introduced to international affairs by a state, rather than by state-supported or independent organizations. Theodore Abel's article<sup>12</sup> reported that Nazi Germany used a variety of terrorist methods against the Jews. The "final solution," or mass extermination, only represents the last phase of this campaign. The first phase might be called a form of indirect terror. German and European Jews were taken hostage by "special action squads" to ensure the "good conduct" of the Jews abroad and of foreign governments. In addition,

deportation was consciously used to ensure the rise of anti-Semitism abroad and, hence, weaken "Jewish world influence."

Abel wrote the second phase was a policy of direct anti-Jewish persecution that took place in Germany and in German conquered territories. In a dramatic escalation of terror, the Nazis made Jewish leaders hostages to ensure collaboration by Jews in German territories, inflicted physical torture, created hunger and the fear in the ghettos, and implemented the "Aktinonen" policy (kidnapping for slave labor and the death camps). These political terrorism practices were meant to break normal and free people in order to make them instruments of their own destruction.

The infamous "final solution" itself resulted from the failure, in Hitler's eyes, of these two previous phases of Nazi terror. It required the execution of the hostages, not only as a positive act of "solving" the "Jewish problem" once and for all, but also as an enormous act of revenge for Hitler, who believed that the Jews had induced the Allies to wage a war of annihilation upon Germany.

The author felt the Allies recognition of the enormity of the "final solution" did not lead to active support to the dying Jews because Hitler's anti-Jewish propaganda made the Allies fear that any direct aid to the Jews might harm their own popular war effort. The Allies had justified the war successfully as one to preserve Western civilization and they were apprehensive of doing anything that might lend credence

to Hitler's claims that they were fighting to save the Jews. The fate of the Jews, thus, was sealed off from every direction, not merely by Hitler's initial campaign of terror but also by third party reaction to it.

#### State Terrorism: Government

The first factor to scrutinize involves the political climate surrounding the initiation of terrorism as a government practice. Group terror emerged against the background of the failure of the revolution of rising expectations of the late 1960s in the developing world and in the light of the increased bureaucratization of government structures in the advanced industrial world." Government terror can occur when ruling elites in societies undergoing increased pressure for social, economic, and political reform appear to find no way (or consciously choose to find no way) of translating these forces into the development of more effective rule. Rather, the government begins to respond to the changing national environment with a curtailment of civil and human rights, with increased militant policies of coercive control of collective and individual behavior. Such methods of persuasion, enforcement, and coercive rule are called "state terror."

The second general factor of significant import to the study of state terror is the ideology of the ruling group of the state. More than any other ideological factor, scholars

have focused at length on increases in authoritarianism as directly linked to increases in government terror and repression. The character of state terror is the third general factor. Within this category are the types of atrocities that may be perpetrated by government and the technologies available to the state terror apparatus. Table 2.1 lists the alternatives the a state may operationalize against its population according to tactics designed to terrorize through information control, economic coercion, control of legal and law enforcement mechanisms, and those the appear directly life threatening.

Since the French Revolution, terror for secular purposes has eclipsed terror for religious ends. The state and rebels, who strike against the state as the embodiment of a "repressive" order, are the two major organizers of the new terror. State terror is the most important of the two phenomena. Certainly, it is responsible for more casualties, and it had probably also produced greater political consequences. State terror, it is worth noting, bears some affinity to practices of Christian millenarian sects which often attempted to establish or capture governmental machinery to create the new world. Such as the seventeenth century Spanish conquest of the great Aztec and Mayan civilization in Mexico and Central America.

\* \* \* \* \*

Table 2.1

ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE AS TERRORIST<sup>14</sup>Information Control

1. Surveillance of personal activity via wiretapping, following movements, and so on.
2. Attachments/falsification of personal documents and records.
3. Press censorship.
4. "Thought reform."

Law Enforcement/Legal

1. Legislation of a discriminatory (nature).
2. Expulsions/exile.
3. No protection against the crimes and terrors of other citizens.
4. Direct and arbitrary arrest.

Economic Coercion

1. Economic discrimination.
2. Extortion/bribery.
3. "Guilt" due to one's economic associations or activities.

Life Threatening

1. Direct attacks--beating/bombing of home or business.
2. Kidnapping/disappearances.
3. Threats to one's family.
4. Torture and interrogation when under government control.

\* \* \* \* \*

The literature suggests systems of terror fall into two major categories, depending on whether they work against or coincide with the dominant power structure. One type is toward overthrowing a system of authority, such as a state, either to enable the insurgents to seize control of the state or to clear the way for some other group approved by them.<sup>15</sup> Systems of terror in the other category coincide and coact



with systems of authority and are directed by those who already control the ordinary institutions of power. Instead of relying entirely on authority, conventional rules, and legitimate technologies, the men in power choose to ignite a regime of terror."

Two of the best scholars of political terrorism are Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez. Their first volume of two "classics" on the subject is The State As Terrorist.<sup>17</sup> This collection is cited very often by other authors in the field. They declare from the first word political terrorism has grown dramatically in the past decade (now in 1992 that would expand to over the last two decades). The authors are surprised it has taken scholars so long to "reinterest" themselves in state terrorism as a course of study. Moreover, it is a problem that requires investment in theory building and analysis. Such a sobering source justifying the study of state terror is political history. Quoted from Chapter One of this thesis, the twentieth century alone has witnessed numerous purges by post revolutionary governments other than the institutionalized systems of terror that developed under Stalin and Hitler. Many cases of massive massacres amounting to genocide including Indonesia, Chile, Kampuchea, Equatorial Guinea, and many other places. All these extrajudicial executions stand as overwhelming empirical evidence that state violence is a standard operating procedure of numerous contemporary regimes.

It became quite clear in that the scholarly research indicates the civilized world seems to be more than willing to bring to the world table any discourse on insurgent terrorism. Developing and developed nations have always viewed acts committed by the state as distinct from independent insurgent type terrorist groups. The United Nations discussion on terrorism led to long conflicts on three legal claims:"

1. Terrorism is defined and constituted by the "criminal acts" taken against governments by individuals or groups.

2. Terrorism should not be defined by acts, but in a broader context so as to include exploits of governmental groups that violate human rights and reinforce policies such as apartheid.

3. The definition of terrorism resides in the motivation of the actor and the context of the act.

No consensus was achieved on these positions. But the discussion did bring to the surface that governments on practical, political, and legal grounds could be considered terrorists. U.N. Ambassador Charles Yost put it even more bluntly:

The fact is, of course, that there is a vast amount of hypocrisy on the subject of political terrorism. We all righteously condemn it--except when we ourselves or friends of ours are engaging in it."

The bottom line of terrorism is to deprive its victims, whoever they are, of their most basic human rights. And if we define terrorism by the nature of the act then, not by the identity of the perpetrators or the nature of their cause, an objective definition of terrorism becomes possible." Often deliberated in the literature is how governments use the

phenomenon of oppression and repression. Both subjects are looked on as sometimes a predecessor of political terrorism.

McCamant developed some understandable definitions:

Oppression: is the situation where social and economic privileges are denied to whole classes of people regardless of whether they oppose the authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Repression: the use of coercion or the threat of coercion against opponents or potential opponents in order to prevent or weaken their capability to oppose the authorities and their policies.<sup>12</sup>

Denemark and Lehman indicate repression is a more general and pervasive phenomenon that systematically and structurally molds the individual.<sup>13</sup> Stohl and Lopez state clearly that they do not consider all coercive conduct of the state to be terrorist acts. Furthermore, they maintain terrorism is a very special form of state violence and behavior. In addition, oppression and repression are each distinct phenomenon. As with insurgent terrorism, in state terrorism, the audience to the act or the threatened act may be more important than the immediate victim. Such was the case of Tonita. The victim serves as a persuasive advertisement of the power of the state. Figure 2.1 illustrates the flow from oppression to terrorism. The authors imply it is simple model to present the process.

\* \* \* \* \*

Figure 2.1

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OPPRESSION----->REPRESSION----->TERRORISM

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The second Stohl and Lopez "classic" is Government Violence and Repression.<sup>14</sup> This volume of essays, with some of the same authors as the first, moves to further define the study of terror and violence employed by governments. Stohl has identified several different forms of state-sponsored terrorism. The first is "covert state terrorism," which is divided into two subtypes:<sup>15</sup>

Clandestine state terrorism: The state itself directly participates in acts of terrorism.

State-sponsored terrorism: Which consists of the state employing other groups to carry out terrorist acts on its behalf.

A second basic category is "surrogate terrorism," again subdivided into two lesser varieties:<sup>16</sup>

State supported terrorism: occurring when an interested state supports some their party after it has carried out an act of terrorism that happens to be perceived as being in the interests of the supporting state.

State acquiescence to terrorism: This type ensues when a state approves or fails to condemn or act against an act of terrorism carried out by a third party.

One very important contributor to the Stohl & Lopez edition is Ted R. Gurr, an author who appears to be well known in the field of political terrorism. He describes the circumstances in which political elites are likely to use terror and some distinctions among types of state terrorism. His assumption is a simple one: state terror arises out of conflict between elites and non-elites.<sup>17</sup> And just what has the non-elite response been? The central puzzle is the question of whether violent repression of opposition movements

deters or stimulates opposition activity generally and opposition violence specifically. One study argues that violent repression disrupts the organizational capacity of the opposition, reducing the willingness of potential supporters to join the opposition." Other scholars, such as Gurr and Mason," maintain violent repression erodes the popular legitimacy of the regime, compelling the opposition to resort to violence to force a revolutionary change of the regime."

There is a third view, proposing an inverted U-shaped relationship between regime coerciveness and opposition." " That is, when government repression is very low, opposition violence is not needed because a variety of conventional tactics are available for the redress of grievances among the populace; and when repression is high, the opposite holds true. Mason's model (by which nonelites choose between supporting the government, the opposition, or neither) shows the threat of violence, not the promise or reward or the appeal of ideology, is what induces non-elites to participate in revolutionary organizations."

Another important parallel work on state violence is the Jackson (et al) article" about struggle and intimidation in reliant states. The study examined the interaction between civil conflict and state coercion in nations undergoing development. From the model, the authors were able to conclude that the intensity with which both state and opposition react to each other is of vital importance and the

external system plays a significant role in accounting for differences in national time paths. The author's theory argues that external dependence of poor nations on rich nations produces distortions in the economic structures of poor societies. These distortions create a large potential for conflict. Under mounting pressure from both external and endemic players, the reliant nation tries to steady the predicament via coercion to contain conflict. Consequently, the alloy of external dependence with quiescent conflict leads to acceleration of the levels of violence used by both the state and opposition. Such a dependency creates an artificial economy and new elites rise to power. Their status could change as the external aid fluctuates. Thus coercion may be necessary.

In a relatively advanced industrial state, effective coercion can come with the expensive technology and sophisticated security forces (e.g. South Africa and the "former" USSR). A less developed state may support its coercive apparatus through a pattern of dependence, acquiring the weapons, technology, and training from a developed country (e.g. U.S. support, \$2 million per day in El Salvador for the ARENA party<sup>11</sup>). Such support may produce enough wealth that can be siphoned off to support a state security apparatus. The level of adequate resources available to the state, not the extent of dependence, can account for high levels of coercion. Out of the \$3 billion plus aid to El Salvador, only

\$9.2 million has been spent to reform the Salvadoran justice system and investigate death squad activity. "The money has bought nothing."

Cited more than any other source are the writings and investigations conducted by the human rights group Amnesty International (AI). They, in addition to the dozens of country specific reports printed every year, have published a critical work, Political Killings By Governments.' AI declares that hundreds of thousands, in the past ten years, have been killed by the political authorities in their countries. And the killings continue in most regions of the world. Such murders by governments take place in different parts of the world and in countries of widely differing ideologies, from individual assassinations to the wholesale slaughter of opposition or ethnic groups. These killings are crimes that flout the absolute principle that governments must protect their citizens. And governments in which these heinous acts take place will cover up, deny such acts, perform superficial investigations, or just lie. When then Vice President Bush went to El Salvador in 1983, he had a list of known death squad members and wanted the ARENA government to do something. They transferred out of sight or retired just those on that list. In this publication, AI cites specific reports from around the world. Since the 1960's, several governments have decided on wholesale liquidation of political opposition. Indonesia, 1965, General Suharto's regime, after

an aborted coup attempt by the communist party (PKI), saw the liquidation of over 500,000 in nine months. President Sukarno stated nine months before the coup he had no objection if Indonesia were to evolve into a communist state."

Americas Watch Committee is another human rights organization actively involved in reporting state terrorism. They summarize any government has the right to defend itself against violent efforts to overthrow it in accordance with internationally recognized legal norms. How governments treat its citizens within its borders is of legitimate concern to the international community, and, this interest is relatively new in the history of relations among nations. Its origins lie in international condemnation of the massive human rights violations of World War II and the formation of the United Nations in the aftermath of the war and its dedication to human rights. Since then, a series of international instruments have been ratified by most nations, thus legally binding to them. Such accords specify fundamental rights states agree to respect and protect. International concern for human rights abuses in any country is most pressing when it is demonstrated that a government is engaging in a systematic pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.

In addition to the mainstream scholarly and popular publications covering human rights and state terrorism, the alternative press has reported this phenomenon its many of its



publications (e.g. Mother Jones, In These Times, The Guardian, etc.). One must treat these pieces with a touch of skepticism. Those articles printed in the alternative press were at times "sensational;" yet many seemed to be fairly objective and generally accurate in their reporting. But others, "Is there an Israeli death squad operating in the (occupied) territories?" sound similar to a National Enquirer headline. The focus of alternative press journalists is Central America, in particular, El Salvador, has been featured by several publications.

To continue the review, another author, Dr. John Oldale, with a doctorate from Cambridge, has written articles on human rights, terrorism, and government repression primarily in developing countries. His article, "Government Sanctioned Murder," published in Geographical, lays a good foundation for the layman to understand this subject. The author maintains that, lethal force may be used as a last resort. But the term "last resort" is widely open to dispute. When killing with regularity, there exists a suspicion that a deliberate policy is perceived as being cheaper or more effective than possible alternatives. In such a situation, a society is likely to grow increasingly polarized and a culture of violence becomes institutionalized within law enforcement agencies. Consequently, police officers may decide its easier to murder than to arrest. Such action is likely in states where resources are stretched or the judicial process is seen

as cumbersome. Dr. Oldale asserts, "Regimes indulge in extrajudicial execution in response to challenges (perceived or real)... justifying the use of the state's monopoly of violence in self-defense.""

In "The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror,"" Mason and Krane demonstrate theoretically that carefully targeted repressive violence may in fact *reduce* the level of active popular support for the opposition, at least temporarily. However, as the level of repressive violence escalates and its application becomes more indiscriminate, it may in fact produce increases in active support for the very same opposition. The authors argue that, "the conditions of structural dependence characterizing these regimes leave them without the institutional machinery, economic resources, or political will to address opposition challenges through more accommodative programs of reform. Thus, escalating repression is perpetrated not because it has a high probability of success but because the weakness of the state precludes its resort to less violent alternatives.""

They illustrated their theory with a case study in El Salvador. The article says the term "death squad" is now used in discourse on violence in the Third World and that this subject has only recently been the subject of scholarly study. Lack of such systematic analysis could be due to the politically charged nature of the subject. The question of US

policy in supporting regimes that use death squads was also raised. How can we preach human rights, then appropriate tax dollars to support terrorist governments?

\* \* \* \* \*

Table 2.2

THE GLOBAL PICTURE

Symbols: D .... Disappearances Reported  
 Q .... Death Squads Active  
 A .... Assassinations Carried Abroad Since 1970  
 G .... Genocide Since 1960 (not comprehensive)

<u>Nation</u>	<u>Symbols</u>	<u>Comments</u>
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SOUTH/CENTRAL AMERICA

Brazil	D	Anti-crime death squads in Sao Paulo (also active elsewhere), rural killing widespread, killings of indigenous indians.
Chile	D,Q,A	90 deaths since 1985, most repression now ceased. But some shootings into demonstrations.
Colombia	D,Q	1,500+ extrajudicial executions, 250 disappearances, situation worsening.
Ecuador	D,Q	Limited death squad activity and disappearances (localized and non-political).
El Salva	D,Q	Hundreds of disappearances and killings.
Guatemala	D,Q	Hundreds of deaths, recent increase in rate of killings.
Haiti	Q	Widespread killing.
Honduras	D,Q	Disappearances and murders by death squads.
Mexico	D	Rural killings, urban disappearances.

Nicaragua	D	Disappearances and extrajudicial executions in areas of conflict.
Peru	D,Q	3000+ disappearances, hundreds of army killings, deaths of prisoners.

#### EUROPE

Bulgaria	A	Killings over bulgarization of Turks in summer of 1989--at least 4 dead, assassinations committed abroad.
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#### MIDDLE EAST

Iran	A,G	Unsafe executions on a massive scale(1,200 reported in 1989, actual figure probably at least 10x higher). Summary executions, executions substituted for jail sentences, periodic jail "clearances." Assassinations abroad. Genocide against Bah'is (and previously Kurds).
Iraq	G,A,D	Thousands of extrajudicial killings. Genocide against Kurds--use of chemical weapons against civilians. Large number of disappearances. Political prisoners poisoned. Assassination of dissidents living in Sudan confirmed.
Libya	A	Ending of policy of "physical liquidation" announced. No cases of extrajudicial killings reported since.
Morocco	D	Deaths due to poor prison conditions. Disappearances of Western Saharans.
Syria	D	Deaths due to torture relatively frequent, disappearances.
So. Yemen	D	Summary executions over security issues, disappearances in past.

#### ASIA/OCEANIA

Afghanis	D	Disappearances and summary executions.
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Banglad	G	Troops opened fire election rallies. Up to 300 killed as retaliatory killings by army.
Cambodia	G	Little information on present. Khmer Rouge genocide 1975-79.
India	D	Summary executions, deaths by torture.
Indonesia	D,Q,G	Death squads against criminals. Disappearances. Deaths in custody. Genocide--Chinese, 1965, Timorese, 1975.
Nepal	D	6 disappearances in 1985 reported. Many more unconfirmed.
Philippi	D,Q	Dozens of disappearances, right-wing death squads. Extrajudicial killings by security forces common.
Sri Lanka	D,Q	Hundreds of disappearances death squads widespread reports of summary executions.

#### AFRICA

Burundi	G	Genocide 1972 and 1988.
Chad	D	Frequent reports of deaths in custody. Summary executions of captured rebels.
Guinea	D	Executions ordered by "public tribunals. disappearances and summary executions.
Namibia	Q	Widespread death squad killings. South African officers implicated.
Niger	D	Possible disappearances.
Rwanda	G	Genocide, 1963-64.
S.Africa	D,Q,A	Deaths in political custody, repeated use of shooting to suppress demonstrations. Death and assassination squads. Disappearances.
Sudan	G,Q	Hundreds of civilians killed in South. Armed civil militia atrocities. Summary executions. Genocide, South, 1955-70.
Togo	G	Abduction of suspects from abroad. Torture.

Uganda        G        Constant reports of extrajudicial execution in North. Atrocities (eg. families burned alive in huts). Prisoners beaten or tortured to death. Genocide: repeated inter-tribal genocides since independence.

\* \* \* \* \*

The authors give their definition of the death squad:

Military, paramilitary, police, and irregular units that engage in violent acts against a population in order to deter them from lending support to opposition groups."

The authors assert death squads are most prevalent in societies where an authoritarian alliance between the military and a powerful economic elite is faced with a serious challenge to its legitimate authority. Mason states the obvious: "what the ruling elite fear most is an opposition movement that could take power."" To comprehend just how widespread is the use of state terrorism (through the first part of 1990), see table 2.2.

#### The Death Squad: Background

As the definition in Chapter One stated, the death squad is a nominally autonomous group of (usually) police or military under sanction by the state. There is some literature giving descriptions of their actions, methods of training for squad members, and even testimony by former soldiers or police officers who were part of the death squad. Considering little scholarly research exists on this topic, the best source remains Amnesty International. This organization has published a series of briefings on most

countries with death squads in operation. This researcher has discovered no source rebutting what AI publishes. Other sources of first hand information come from the alternative press. As alluded to beforehand, while the reader should remain a little skeptical, much of what they publish is corroborated by AI reports.

The death squad, as a unit, is thought to have started in the 1960's in Guatemala and Brazil moving rapidly to other South and Central American countries. The term "death squads" became popularized in the 1970's when their actions in El Salvador made the headlines. Most of the current notoriety is in Peru and Sri Lanka, whose governments have been using death squads in response to widening guerrilla activity.

One researcher argues there is variety in the structure of death squads. Mr. Vanderkroef in his article, "Terrorism by Public Authority: The Case of The Death Squads of Indonesia And The Philippines," summarizes there exists two distinct categories of death squad activity: crime-preventive and political-ideological. In his study, the author indicates the crime-preventive type includes the so-called "secret marshals" in the Philippines and the "petrus" in Indonesia. The "secret marshals" were an informal organization of Manila plainclothes police whose mission was to combat crime on public transportation. They have been deactivated and reactivated several times with extrajudicial executions reported. Particularly notorious was their "on the spot"

executions of so called street criminals. The "petrus" in Indonesia are composed of military police and national police personnel with a charter of controlling the surge in urban crime. Fairly conservative data indicate the "petrus" have killed over 10,000 "criminals and recidivists." The "petrus" death squads have conducted public executions.

The other class of death squads addressed by the author is political-ideological. The "Gestapu" in Indonesia went into action after a failed coup d'etat. Made up of Army units, one authoritative calculation puts the death toll at 250,000. The "Gestapu" murdered members of the largest communist party outside the Soviet bloc. In the Philippines, the "New Peoples Army (NPA)," a communist dominated group operating out of the southern island of Mindanau, operated "sparrow units;" death squads of the NPA practicing popular justice by liquidating popular enemies. Included in their death toll are five American service members assassinated outside Clark Air Base. The author also indicates there are at least five other political-ideological death squad units operating in the Philippines.

In terroristic states, the agents of violence are structurally detached, often living apart and usually organized as independent social units--armies, corps of executioners, alien mercenaries, special police, etc. In the Nazi state, the SS and the Gestapo were organized as



specialists in terror, even dissociated structurally from other staffs of violence such as the army and the police.

### The Death Squad: Extrajudicial Executions

Rarely does one who commits the act come forward to recant his participation. Most who do attempt to speak out, for whatever motivations, usually find themselves becoming a victim. The following is extraordinary testimony unearthed in the literature review was taken from a former conscript in the Guatemalan army, who was part of a death squad in that country in the early 1980's.

"Did you have permission to kill anyone?"

"Only suspicious characters. And they gave us orders of the day. And we also had classes--we were students just like the suspects! And we could kill them. And they have us special identity cards so that if there were any police around, even if there were more of them than us and we did certain things we could just show them these, so they wouldn't seize us and we could get away. That's what they told us. They gave us cards, so that if we made some great mistake we could kill someone, just like that, and then escape, and the police wouldn't have the power to seize us, we could just show them the cards."

"And the Police don't do anything?"

"They don't do anything, nothing. So I realized that the army is a school for murderers. It is as simple as that. They said to me, if you discover your father is in subversive movements--I didn't understand the word--'subversive,' they said, is whatever is against the government and is what causes disorder in Guatemala--if your father is involved in groups like that, kill him, because if you don't he'll try and kill us...."

An alternative press article, "Confessions of An Assassin," examines in more detail the individual experience of a former death squad member. Hernan Torres was one of the

first people to leave one of El Salvador's most infamous death squads and live to tell the tale:

As soon as Hernan Torres and his two friends ordered the crowded bus to stop, Sonia Guadalupe Iglesias must have known she was going to die. Torres ripped off Iglesias's shirt as she tried to flee, but there was no escape--she was on El Doc's list. In front of the startled passengers, Iglesias was shot in the back and the head with a .45 pistol. The blood shed did not stop there. Her two companions were killed. Two passengers who stood up were also gunned down. A National Guardsman in Torres's group was wounded. "We were frightened that we were going to die," said Torres, "but it was our mission to terminate them, because otherwise El Doc would have killed us."

Hernan Torres was sick and hungry when Dr. Antonio "El Doc" Regaladi, a former dentist, recruited him in the latter half of the 1970's. El Doc's growing private army, sanctioned by the D'Aubuisson ARENA government, was disguised as a boy scout troop so as not to arouse the suspicions of the parents. The troop, made up of boys in their late teens, operated in a large area around Santiago de Maria, protecting the rich coffee and cotton harvests from attacks by leftist rebels or peasants seeking de facto land reform.

Death squad operations are not confined to a particular region. Extrajudicial executions and torture at the hands of the state armed forces and police take place in all hemispheres. One of Amnesty International's recent briefings discussed the country of Myanmar (formerly Burma). "Myanmar has been ruled by the military for almost three decades. Widespread civil unrest erupted in March 1988 in an attempted to overthrow General Ne Win's government and install a multi-

party democracy. Several thousand demonstrators, including children, were killed by the army and police between March and August of that year.

Thetkaya is a small village in the Eastern state of Kayin, close to the Thai border. Most of the villagers are farmers and traders; some work at a nearby timber mill. In December of 1989, most of Thetkaya's residents had gathered to watch a film. Without any warning, they were attacked by army troops and police searching for "dissidents." The soldiers opened fire indiscriminately, killing and wounding several villagers. Among the dead were two young girls and a fifteen year old Buddhist monk."

#### The Death Squad: "Training"

Very little is written about how a death squad member is trained to perform such horrifying acts of torture and murder. However, a Catholic priest working in El Salvador, Daniel Santiago, writes in "The Death Merchants,"<sup>11</sup> about the slaughter of Tonita's family in El Salvador mentioned in chapter one. Take a moment and return to the massacre of Tonita's family at the beginning of chapter one.

The author argues that it takes effort to decapitate old women and small children. It takes imagination to arrange their torsos around the table as if about to share a feast of their own blood. He goes on to say that other macabre scenes have been created by the Salvadoran armed forces in their ten year exhibition of terror and death. Father Santiago declares, "People are not just killed by death squads in El Salvador--they are decapitated and then their heads are placed on piles and used to dot the landscape. Men are not just

disemboweled by the Salvadoran Treasury Police; their severed genitalia are stuffed into their mouths. Salvadoran women are not just raped by the National Guard; their wombs are cut from their bodies and used to cover their faces. It is not enough to kill children; they are dragged over barbed wire until the flesh falls from their bones while parents are forced to watch."

The author asserts the Salvadoran death squads and armed forces are clearly sadomasochistic. Their killings have sexual overtones. How can the state, a political body of supposedly rational intelligent human beings, get men to perform such horrors? Psychologists are of the opinion that when children are molested by adults, they often grow up to molest other children. According to Santiago, in El Salvador, security forces had regularly kidnapped 13 and 14 year old recruits from the poorest neighborhoods, at just the age they are becoming aware of their sexuality. Of course there followed a brief interval during which recruits may be ransomed by their families. But the poor lack resources for the ransom of their young. After a short time, the boys undergo an indoctrination into the armed forces much like the rituals developed by the S.S., where they were brutalized and raped. Deserters say periodically the sodomizing is done by older members of the service. Sometimes the penetration is simulated with a wooden object carved to resemble a large penis. Shamed and humiliated, the recruits can only reclaim

their dignity through repetition. They convince themselves what happened to them was insignificant by doing the same to others.

### The Death Squad: Torture

A very common trait upon deaths squads is the use of torture to extract "confessions," to torment, or just for the twisted fiendish pleasure of the torturer. An example of this trait is the army "counter-insurgency" troops of Myanmar. When not engaged in extrajudiciously executing those captured, the squads would "save" a few individuals for torture. AI reports torture has a distinctive vocabulary in Myanmar.

Ordinary beatings may be accompanied or followed by torture techniques such as the "helicopter"--being spun around while hanging from the ceiling, sometimes attached to a fan; "walking on the seashore"--being forced to crawl on broken glass or sharp gravel; "riding the motor-cycle"--being forced to crouch over an imaginary motorbike for hours at a time, and beaten if the victim did not make motor-cycle sounds for hours; the "iron road"--having an iron bar or a bamboo cane rolled up and down the shins often until the skin comes off; the "wet submarine"--near suffocation through drowning."

For years torture has been an almost inevitable consequence of arrest and interrogation by Myanmaran death squads. The methods are the same in the cities and remote areas; and the results are usually summary execution.

In the Middle East, a every recent and virtually unreported location of death squad activity were the widespread abuses of human rights that had been perpetrated by Iraqi forces following the invasion of Kuwait in 1990." AI

reports Iraqi forces at all levels appear to have been involved in the infliction of torture on detainees in occupied Kuwait. They include ordinary soldiers from Iraq's regular army, senior military personnel, agents of Iraqi intelligence and their "special security" forces. It was primarily these "special security" units who were responsible.

Their objective was to extract confessions from actual or suspected members of the Kuwaiti military or government, to force cooperation, or to extract information on Kuwaitis who were suspected of participating in a resistance movement. Another motivation was to force Kuwaitis to make statements against the Kuwaiti ruling family and government and making declarations of allegiance to Iraq's President Saddam Hussan. Finally, the sheer brutality of the torture inflicted on detainees by Iraqi security forces was designed to terrorize the population at large and to discourage others from expressing, in whatever form, their opposition to the Iraqi presence in Kuwait. Table 2.3 lists the details of methods of torture used by the Iraqis as reported to AI.

\* \* \* \* \*

Table 2.3

METHODS OF TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

1. Beatings on all parts of the body, involving punching, slapping, delivering Karate-style blows and kicking with heavy army boots. Implements used for beating include canes, metal rods, whips, steel cables, hosepipes, rubber truncheons and rifle butts.

2. Falanga: prolonged beating on the soles of the feet. Sometimes the detainee was forced to walk or run after the beating.
3. Suspending the detainee by the feet, or by the arms which are tied behind the back.
4. Beating the detainee while suspended from a rotating fan in the ceiling.
5. Breaking of the arms, legs or ribs; dislocating elbow and shoulder joints.
6. Lifting the detainee high up in the air and then dropping him, sometimes resulting in the fracturing of bones.
7. Applying pressure to the fingers with a clamp-like instrument.
8. Slashing the face, arms or legs with knives.
9. Tearing off the finger and toenails.
10. Boring a hole in the leg, apparently with a type of drilling tool.
11. Cutting off of the tongue and ear.
12. Gouging out of the eyes.
13. Castration.
14. Hammering nails into the hands.
15. Piercing the skin with pins or staplers.
16. Shooting the detainee in the arm or leg at point blank range, followed by deprivation of the necessary medical treatment.
17. Rape of women (including virgins and female POWs) and young men.
18. Inserting bottle necks, sometimes breaking them in the rectum.
19. Tying a string around the penis and pulling it tightly.
20. Pumping air using a pipe through the anus, particularly of young boys.

21. Applying electricity to sensitive parts of the body, including the ears, lips, tongue, fingers, toes and genitals. Sometimes the detainee is doused with water prior to the administration of electricity. The electrical instruments used include electric batons as well as wires fitted with clips (like those used to recharge car batteries but smaller in size).

22. Burning various parts of the body, including the genitals, with domestic appliances such as electric iron, with heated metal rods, or with a naked flame.

23. Extinguishing cigarettes on the eyeballs or on various parts of the body, including the genitals, nipples, chest and hands.

24. Pouring hot and cold water alternately over the detainee.

25. Placing the detainee in a cold, air-conditioned room for several hours, and then immediately into a heated room.

26. Pouring an acid-like substance onto the eyes, causing blindness.

27. Pouring caustic substances onto the eyes, causing blindness.

28. Plucking facial hair, particularly the beard, with pincers or pliers.

29. Placing heavy weights on the detainee's body.

30. Spitting into the detainee's mouth.

31. Exposing the detainee to the sun for several hours at a stretch without water.

32. Subjecting the detainee to mock execution. This includes holding the head below water to the point of near suffocation; going through the motions of execution by firing squad; and holding a gun to the head or in the mouth and pulling the trigger.

33. Forcing the detainee to watch others being tortured, or to hear their screams.

34. Raping or torturing the detainee's relatives in his or her presence; threatening the detainee with such acts.

35. Threatening the detainee with torture methods such as the electric chair (al-Kursi al- Rajjaj), or with death by immersion in an acid bath.



36. Deprivation of medical treatment.
37. Deprivation of sleep, food, water, fresh air and toilet or washing facilities.
38. Degrading the detainee by using obscene language or insults.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following is an extract from the testimony of a Kuwaiti former detainee held in al-Kadhima Sports Club in Kuwait City. He describes the condition of other detainees held with him, including that of a thirteen year old boy:

... One of the soldiers led us into the squash court, and we saw many Kuwaitis of different ages, ranging between thirteen and forty-five. Some of them had fainted from torture. I sat next to a thirteen year old boy whose body looked blue. I asked him, "What have you confessed to?" He said: "My crime was to shout Allahu Akbar (God Is Great!) at every oppressor, and I was tortured with electricity for four days. The skin on my back was peeling and I can only sleep while sitting." There was another young man who was unable to stand or hold anything because the skin on his hands and feet had split and peeled from being tortured with flames. Worse than that, I saw one of the young men from the resistance whose finger and toenails had been torn off, and whose body was blue from (the application of) electricity.

He had become blind because they had used a kind of caustic substance to torture him. They had inserted a glass bottle in his anus and beat him across the buttocks with clubs until the glass shattered inside him. He was barely alive, unaware of what was happening around him. Then he told me who he was and said, "Take care of my parents because I am their only son and they have no one in the world except me." I asked him, "Why have you done this?" So he said, "There is nothing more precious to me than my father and mother, except my country ... If Kuwait is thirsty I will water it with my blood." He started singing, "I am a Kuwaiti," and I started crying, not from fear but because of the situation we were in..."

This researcher could add article upon article discussing death squad torture. One would hope their operating procedure

at this point is lucidly clear. However, there exists the one facet of death squad actions that has gained the greatest media attention, and found on the front page, the term "disappearances."

### The Death Squad: Disappearances

Many extrajudicious killings at the hands of death squads have been concealed because the victims have "disappeared:" the authorities have tried to hide both the fact of the murder and their own responsibility. The victims of this technique of state terrorism are taken into custody and then "disappear:" their friends and relatives cannot find out where they are held or what has happened to them. Sometimes the victims of "disappearance" are later discovered in prison, or released; sometimes it is learned that they have been executed.

"Disappearances" and extrajudicial executions are frequently connected. Often victims of death squad killings are secretly abducted before being slain. The "disappearance" disguises the killing. But a "disappearance" is not always followed by death, nor are all killings preceded by a "disappearance."

It was in Guatemala in the mid-1960s that a group of relatives of "disappeared" people used the term by which these human rights violations are now known throughout the world. Some modern examples discovered in the literature review

include Guinea, where President Sekou Toure's government has failed to account for approximately 2,900 prisoners who "disappeared" after being arrested for political reasons between 1969 and 1976.'" Many are believed to have died as a result of torture, execution, deliberate starvation or inhuman prison conditions.

In Columbia, there is convincing evidence that death squads (made up of Columbian police, and military personnel and their civilian auxiliaries), acting on the authority of the army high command, are responsible for thousands of political killings and "disappearances" in that country.'" AI recounts that over one thousand "disappearances" were unresolved. Infrequently, there are witnesses who have observed individuals being taken into custody by uniformed members of the security forces or being taken away by men known to be plainclothes police or army intelligence officers. Sometimes when death squads are seen arresting a person, the team will attempt a cover up by admitting an arrest took place but saying the person was released or escaped; thus virtually guaranteeing the victim "disappears."

#### The Death Squad: Genocide

To this point, the reader should understand the when confronted with a challenge to their legitimacy, if opting for repression, governments generally adopt one of two strategies: either dissidents or insurgents are individually picked off

i.e. extrajudicial executions by death squads, or techniques are employed to spread terror and force target groups unto submission, i.e. torture and "disappearances." There is also a third option, however, a "final solution" in which the objective is the physical annihilation of an entire social group. This is genocide. The most infamous example was the Nazi Holocaust, but genocide continues as a problem.

There is a greater array of literature discussing genocide than one would expect considering the research must be accomplished after the fact, and, it is usually confined to the discussion of theory with some focus on the actual events. After the Nazis, the most recent act of genocide documented occurred in Cambodia. Between 1975 and 1979, two and a half million people (over a third of the population) were slaughtered by the Khmer Rouge regime led by Pol Pot and Leng Sary.<sup>57</sup>

The Cambodian genocide was chiefly directed at "new people"--inhabitants of the cities, intelligentsia, or anyone who expressed the slightest hint of dissent, in fact, more or less all those who were not peasants (the "base people") or members of the Khmer Rouge. The aim was to eradicate all taints of foreign influence in order to achieve an ultra-nationalistic and egalitarian non-technological society completely isolated from the rest of the world.

The process began on the seventeenth of April, 1975, the first day of overall Khmer Rouge control, Phnom Penh and the

other cities were evacuated under pain of death to the inhabitants. Thirty percent of Cambodia's population, marched to work camps in the country side, by "militia squads," to be "re-educated" through labor and starvation. Children, the disabled, and those in hospital beds were no exception; one of the marchers remembers seeing the corpse of a child every two hundred meters. Members of the previous government, police and army were executed immediately by Khmer Rouge death squads.

Later, to classify as an intellectual and so to warrant death, it was often sufficient just to be wearing glasses, knowing how to repair a car, or even having been to secondary school. Later still, having been related to or friendly with a previous victim resulted in death. Eventually, in the relentless quest for absolute purity, the slaughter turned inward when whole branches of the Khmer Rouge itself were liquidated for having been insufficiently rigorous in the hunting out of opponents. Throughout the next four years international protest was somewhat effective; but, it was only when the Vietnamese unilaterally invaded in 1979 that the carnage finally ceased.

Another chronicled feat of genocide perpetrated in the last twenty years took place in Uganda. At least one hundred thousand and possibly as many as half a million people were killed by security forces during the eight years of President Idi Amin's rule (1971-1979).'' The victims included members

of particular ethnic groups, religious leaders, judges, lawyers, students, intellectuals and foreign nationals. Those who were not killed outright, or shortly after arrest, were mostly tortured by the army, the intelligence service or a special police unit, and then killed. Idi Amin did not leave many witnesses. However, what follows is the testimony of a surviving prisoner who had been held in the Naguru Public Safety Unit barracks, Uganda, during that regime:

... I was held down with soldiers treading on my wrists and legs, and pins were stuck under my toenails... The next day we were ordered to crawl over some very sharp stones which cut our knees and hands will they bled. The two in front were ordered to go outside. I heard many shots from a machine gun. It just kept firing and firing for what seemed like one hour. After the shooting stopped, the four of us were ordered to go outside too. I thought this was the end but we were told to load what must have been a thousand bodies into trucks. It took us the rest of the day and the night to finish the task."

Murder, torture, and even genocide are the trademarks of the death squad. They operate in all parts of the world, and have been doing so since the beginning of recorded history. As referred to, the death squad is the instrument of a government policy of state terrorism. But what of the victim. How are victims chosen and why? To this point the reader should have some concept of who the victims are.

### The Victims

To build some background on death squad victims, first a very brief overview of the basics of victimology. This subject has been studied ad nauseam by criminal justice

scholars. And it bears some relevance to the study of death squads. Victimology has been variously defined as the study of the criminal-victim relationship." As an identifiable branch of criminology, it has been studied as early as the 1940's. Victimology concerns the interaction in which both the criminal offender and the victim have functional roles and responsibilities.

Scholars have attempted to develop victim typologies to classify the characteristics of victims, but actually they often typify social and psychological situations rather than the constant patterns of the personal makeup of victims. The "easy" victim and the "difficult" victim appear according to the balance of forces in a given criminal drama. One attempt at classification which may have relevance to this thesis was accomplished by Fattah." Of his five categories, the "Latent or Predisposed Victim," type (who have certain predispositions for being a victim) somewhat identifies the typical death squad victim. Better still is the Mendelsohn classification" called the "completely innocent victim" type, with the obvious explanation; and the "victim due to his ignorance," who may be the type of victim killed in Tonita's family.

In examining the death squad victim, the extent research lucidly shows that the state's actions have purposes wider than the simple destruction or harm that the brute force or violence creates. The goal includes carrying a message of intimidation and the creation of fear in an audience whose

behavior the perpetrator seeks to alter. The Chinese understood this well in the proverb, "Kill one, frighten ten thousand."<sup>1</sup> Thus the immediate victim of "torture short of death" is clearly an audience target, but since he or she still walks about the body politic, the *victim role* is to serve as a persuasive advertisement of the power of the state and the message reaches more people than the government might elect to coerce through direct physical acts. Advertisement was the precise mission of the National Guardsmen who murdered Tonita's family, leaving a horror for all to see.

One author proposes that the victims in the process of terror must be expendable--that is, their loss cannot affect the system of co-operation. If the violence liquidates persons who are needed for essential tasks, or if replacements cannot be found for their roles, the system of co-operation breaks down. Victims are often defined by leaders of death squads, as well as the state, as unpersons or as outsiders.<sup>2</sup> Such a breakdown of co-operation occurred in Iran with defeat of the Shah and subsequent rise to power of the Khomeni Regime. Like the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, Khomeni's revolutionary guards targeted the Shah's military, government workers, and the intelligentsia. Regarding the military, most of the Shah's air force was bought from the United States. U.S. trained pilots flew F15 fighters and C130 transports. These air craft were maintained by highly skilled U.S. Air Force schooled technicians. Much of the Iranian Air Force



were supportive of the Islamic revolution. However, most of those pilots and technicians were extrajudiciously executed; thus grounding for good the entire Iranian fighter fleet.

Death squad victims--individuals and entire families--have come from all walks of life and from many political persuasions and religious faiths. Victims are not primarily confined to what a terror state would call "dissidents" or "insurgents." Politicians, government officials, judges, lawyers, military officers, trade unionists, journalists, teachers, students and school children, religious workers and peasants; all have lost their lives at the hands of death squads. Squad members are even known to turn on themselves (i.e. the Khmer Rouge).

In citing specific cases, again most of what is researched comes from Amnesty International and to a lesser extent from other human rights groups and popular periodicals. This researcher could fill several volumes if an attempt was made to discuss all the countries with death squad victims. Of all the victims, the torture, rape, mutilation, and murder of children seems to be a common trait of death squads. Again, the purpose of such heinous acts of mayhem is to spread terror among the population. Terror that will suppress any opposition to the state. Any reasonable man knows that Tonita's two little girls are incapable of participating in any political acts. Yet their severed heads were on the table. Why? First, a population witnessing first hand that

a death squad will kill anyone, at any age, indicates the killers have a low regard for human life. Thus making them more dangerous. Also, there is an inherent human trait about children. One author stated that since the young are weak and inexperienced, they are likely to be victims of attacks. The young are easy victims not only because they are physically undeveloped, "but because they are immature in moral personality and moral resistance."

Unique in the literature review is the current death squad activity in Brazil. The current phenomenon evolves the street children of Brazil's largest cities. According to AI, death squads are killing street children in Brazil's cities; possibly at the rate of one a day." There are about seven million children between the ages of five and eighteen year old living on the streets nationwide." Some are orphans, others ran away, still others were forced to the streets to commit petty thievery, panhandling, or prostitution to help support themselves and their families.

Since 1988, 4,611 children have been tortured and murdered." AI investigators report that poor children in Brazil are treated with contempt by the authorities, risking their lives simply by being in the streets. The death squads, most secretly run by the police, are murdering the children as part of a "clean up the streets" campaign, partly financed by large businesses catering to the tourists and foreign businessmen. And of course there was a major push to clean

the street of Rio in preparation of the World Environment Summit held in June of this year, and attended by leaders of all the major powers--including President Bush.

The Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis (IBASE) indicated in their 1989 report" that in 1988, 457 children, most with no criminal record, were killed by death squads operating in Brazil's three largest cities. The report cited one case of three boys arrested by police in Rio de Janeiro in August 1988 on the suspicion of trying to break into a shop. They were lined up and subjected to "Russian roulette" by the officers. One of the boys, age thirteen, was shot in the head and dumped outside a hotel by the police. He died later in a hospital. The police have shot youths for failing to stop their motorcycles or for what the police called "insulting officers."

The extrajudicial executions of Brazilian street children has drawn condemnation. The U.S. Congress criticized the Brazilian government for ignoring the killing of thousands of street children nationwide by squads paid to combat crime in urban slums. After a nine-month inquiry by a congressional commission, their 1991 study indicated that an average of four killings a day (up from the 1988 estimate of one per day) are carried out by police, drug traffickers and other criminals. Eighty-two percent of the victims were black, twenty-three percent were girls, and almost all of those extrajudiciously executed were nine to seventeen years old."

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## Chapter 3

### Nation Profiles

There were two 'Reigns of Terror', if we would but remember it and consider it; the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon millions; but our shudders are all for the 'horrors' of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak; whereas, what is the horror of swift death by the ax compared with lifelong death from insult, cruelty, and heartbreak? What is swift death by lightning compared with death by slow fire at the stake?--Mark Twain.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Now armed with a solid background on the death squad phenomenon, first part of this chapter will focus on case studies of Sri Lanka and El Salvador. These countries were selected because: first, they are typical of regimes practicing state terror; second, death squads are the primary instrument used; and finally, the activity is still in progress. The detailed examinations will identify the processes and actions of governments, death squads, and their victims. Following the case studies, interviews with individuals who have personally witnessed death squad activity. And last, a discussion focusing on the treatment of death squad survivors.

#### Sri Lanka: Profile'

Sri Lanka is situated in the Indian Ocean off the southern tip of India and comprises one large and several



small islands. Known as Ceylon until 1972, it gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1948. It has twenty-five administrative districts in eight provinces, each with an elected Provincial Council. A presidential form of government was introduced under the Constitution of September 1978. The Constitution provides for a unicameral parliament as the supreme legislative body, its members being elected by a system of modified proportional representation. Executive powers are vested in the president, who is head of state. The president is elected for a term of six years and is eligible for re-election.

Population: sixteen million. Over seventy percent of Sri Lankans are Sinhalese and about eighteen percent are Tamil. Most Sinhalese are Buddhist, while most Tamils are Hindu, but there are also significant Christian (mostly Roman Catholic) and Muslim minorities. The "wet zone" in the southwest, which includes the capital, Colombo, and most of the upcountry has a dense rural population. Some of the "dry zone" areas are fairly sparsely populated. Language: Sinhala and Tamil.

#### Sri Lanka: Introduction

The extraordinary powers introduced by the Sri Lankan Government in the face of armed opposition have provided the very conditions under which detainees are most likely to be tortured, to die in custody, and to "disappear". During some periods Emergency Regulations have also been issued to permit

the security forces to dispose of bodies without post-mortem or inquest, thereby enabling them more readily to cover up their commission of deliberate and unlawful killings. Despite the introduction of these far-reaching security provisions, the authorities were unable to suppress armed Tamil separatists based in northern Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, these powers were retained--despite clear evidence that they had contributed to extensive human rights violations in the north--and were used in the south when Sinhalese critics and opponents of the government launched a particularly violent campaign of armed opposition. As a result, thousands of people "disappeared" in detention or were tortured or extrajudicially executed.

The victims included not only suspected "subversives," but also known members and supporters of lawful opposition parties, some of whom are said to have been arrested on the instructions of individual members of parliament belonging to the ruling United National Party (UNP). Indeed, the background of government responses to the often brutal violence by armed opposition groups appears to have been used at times as a screen to suppress legitimate opposition to the government: "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions continued to be reported in 1990, well after the government claimed it had crushed the *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna*, People's Liberation Front (JVP). The government's willingness to condone the actions of the security forces and government

officials, even when they have committed gross abuses, was underlined in December 1988 when the Indemnity (Amendment) Act was passed days before a presidential election was to take place. This retroactively gives immunity from prosecution to all members of the government and government servants involved in enforcing law and order between 1 August 1977 and 16 December 1988, providing that their actions were carried out "in good faith" and in the public interest. The act also indemnifies any other person who can use the defence of having acted "in good faith" under the authority of a government official.'

Even before this indemnity legislation was introduced, the government's persistent failure to act against security forces abuses had raised major questions about its commitment to or concern for human rights, despite the existence of a chapter in Sri Lanka's Constitution protecting fundamental human rights. For example, the great majority of the 680 or more "disappearances" in the northeast between 1979 and mid-1987, when the Sri Lankan security forces were in the area, remain unexplained.' Not one member of the Sri Lankan security forces was prosecuted for abusing human rights during those years, despite the widespread violations which occurred in the northeast. Only in the very few cases in the south in which torture or extrajudicial execution by the security forces received widespread publicity did investigations result in the prosecution of security forces allegedly responsible,

and in none of these cases had the trials been completed by June 1990.' Following the crushing of the JVP by the beginning of 1990, and the withdrawal of the IPKF in March, a relative calm set in. In February some Emergency Regulations which had facilitated abuses were withdrawn and from March there were fewer reports of human rights violations in the south. Two other important developments were the governments's invitation to the International committee of the Red Cross to visit Sri Lanka, which was taken up in October 1989, and its invitation to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances to visit the island, which is took place in 1990.

In the northeast, however, reports of new abuses committed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelan (LTTE) were received in April 1990. The "Tamil Tigers" (LTTE) had taken control of the Northeast after the Indian troops had withdrawn and were reported to be holding prisoners incommunicado and committing summary executions. In early June, after new reports that the LTTE had taken several hundred Sri Lankan police officers captive in the east , heavy fighting broke out between government forces and the Tigers. Large scale killings by members of the LTTE of Muslim villagers and the subsequent retaliation killings of Tamil villagers by Muslim home guards and other security forces personnel in 1992.'

### Sri Lanka: The Northeast

In August 1987, shortly after the arrival of the Indian forces, fighting intensified between the LTTE and other armed Tamil groups, reportedly over disagreements on the balance of power in the interim administration pending elections of the Northeastern Provincial Council. In October, 15 LTTE combatants who had been arrested committed suicide at Palaly military airfield as they were about to be transferred to Colombo for questioning by the Sri Lankan authorities. In response, the Tigers killed eight Sri Lankan Army soldiers whom they had been holding captive in Jaffna. They also attacked Sinhalese residents of Eastern Province, killing around two hundred people. In the same month, the IPKF launched a major offensive against LTTE strongholds in Jaffna and took control of the city. There were heavy casualties on both sides and hundreds of civilian deaths.

For the next three years the LTTE remained in violent opposition to the IPKF and rival Tamil groups, most notably the Eelan People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), which aligned with the IPKF. In September 1987, in anticipation of the agreed withdrawal of the Indian forces the EPRLF, with the active assistance of the IPKF, forcibly conscripted and trained thousands of young men and women into an unofficial armed force, the Tamil National Army (TNA). As the IPKF withdrew from eastern districts in October 1988, there was fierce fighting between the IPKF and LTTE, with

heavy loss of life.' By the end of the year, an estimated twenty-five thousand Indian troops remained in Jaffna and Trincomalee Districts. In January 1989, fighting was reported between the LTTE and the IPKF in Jaffna. The Tamil Tigers took control of all areas vacated by the Indian forces. When the IPKF finally withdrew from Trincomalee in March, thousands of members and supporters of Tamil groups which had fought the LTTE fled to India.'

#### Sri Lanka: Northeast/"Tamil Tigers"

Political demands for an independent Tamil state in the Northeast of Sri Lanka--to be called "Tamil Eelan:--were first made in 1976 at the inaugural national conference of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). The TULF hoped to achieve its objective by working within the established democratic framework and has not advocated the use of violence. By 1978, however, several violent attacks on the police in Jaffna had occurred. These were attributed to the LTTE. In the following years, other Tamil separatist groups were formed in Northeastern Sri Lanka to engage in armed opposition to the government.

The separatist demand has been fueled by disputes over the allocation of resources within Sri Lanka, access to education and jobs in the state sector, and a general perception by minorities that the state is identified with majority Sinhalese interests and with Buddhism. Ethnic

violence against Tamils in the South contributed further to the call for Tamil independence, particularly among the youth. After the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in 1987, several Tamil militant groups allied with the Indian troops deployed in the Northeast part of the island. The opposition is as capable of committing acts of state terror. Widespread killings of both Tamil and non-Tamil civilians were committed by the LTTE in the period during which the IPKF was deployed in the Northeast. For example, in March 1988, the LTTE attacked two Sinhalese villages in Vavunita District, leaving fifteen dead. The "Tigers" also extrajudiciously executed forty Muslims South of Batticaloa. The worst single attack on civilians attributed to the Tigers occurred in October 1990 at Ullukulama in North Central Province, where fifty-seven villagers were killed. The Tigers also murdered many Tamils suspected of opposing them or informing against them, and members of the civil administration with whom they disagreed. They are believed responsible for the murder in 1990 of a government official. In late 1989, the LTTE began negotiating with the Sri Lankan Government, and in January, 1990, it announced the formation of a new political party--the People's Front of the Liberation Tigers--and said it would contest provincial council elections. After the withdrawal of the IPKF in mid 1990, the tigers gained control of the Northeast. However, by July, heavy fighting began between government forces and the Tigers, the LTTE had captured

several hundred police officers, some of whom they shot dead. Government forces were gradually regaining control of parts of the East in mid-August 1990. By 1992, the Tigers are still very much in control of the Northeast. They are reported to be using their own death squads to commit murder torture, and other forms of summary justice In their quest for a free Tamil state.

#### Sri Lanka: Northeast/Extrajudicial Executions

Numerous killings committed by Indian troops and members of Tamil groups allied to them were reported between 1987 and 1989. Some were reprisal killings of civilians in areas of LTTE attacks against the IPKF; others were individual killings of civilians, sometimes in their homes, during search operations. Two sisters were reportedly killed by Indian soldiers in their home in Udupiddy on 15 February 1989,' the day of the parliamentary elections. Their home was close to an IPKF camp and soldiers regularly passed by the residence. On election day, a soldier, who was walking through the compound, fired his gun at the roof of the main house. A group of nearby soldiers heard the shots and rushed towards the sister's house firing their rifles. The soldiers questioned the sisters, who explained that the firing had been initiated by a soldier. The solders started to leave. Then, according to the testimony of the sister's brother:

When they had gone about ten yards, two of them turned towards us and shot at us. Two of my sisters, Elizabeth



and Joyce, were hit by the gun shots. My sister Joyce was then carrying in her arms her three-year-old.... Both my sisters fell dead. At the IPKF camp, I was told to sign a prepared statement in English.... It was to the effect that the killing of my sisters was by the LTTE.<sup>11</sup>

Some reported extrajudicial executions were apparently caused by civilians failing to obey IPKF instructions, some of which were not widely known. On 13 July, 1989, in the village of Munai, a young fisherman was icing fish when he was reportedly called over by Indian soldiers and beaten. He tried to escape and was shot dead. The IPKF had announced a ban on fishing that day, but this was not known by all fishermen.

Many reported extrajudicial executions by Indian troops were apparently acts of reprisal for the killing of their colleagues by the LTTE. One such incident reportedly occurred in Avarangal, near Jaffna town, on 16 May 1989, nearly a week after an LTTE attack on an IPKF patrol which had left two soldiers dead. According to reports, Indian soldiers from Achchuveli and Puttur camps surrounded the area. Two young men, Ponnar Kanthasamy and Sinnathamby Kanalingam, were arrested and taken to a vineyard where they were shot dead. Another man, S. Ratna, was asked to open his house for a search. He asked to be allowed to find his wife to get the key, and was shot dead as he walked away. Six young laborers were arrested, beaten and taken to the main road. The soldiers stopped a bus and ordered the six aboard. One of the passengers, a postmaster at Chankanai, protested at the way

the six were being treated, and a soldier shot him dead. The other passengers were asked to say that the LTTE had shot at the bus. The six laborers were later taken to the Puttur IPKF camp.<sup>11</sup>

The largest single instance of reprisal killing by the IPKF was reported from Valvettitturai in August 1989. It is known as the Valvettitturai massacre.

Dozens of people were killed on 2 August 1989, by members of the IPKF. The attack was in apparent reprisal for an incident earlier in the day when six soldiers of the seventeenth Sikh regiment were killed and eleven injured when the LTTE ambushed an IPKF patrol in Valvettitturai marketplace. A few hours after the clash, members of the IPKF returned to the market place, and rampaged through the town killing fifty-two residents, many of whom are believed to have been defenseless and deliberately killed, and setting fire to houses and other property. The IPKF cordoned off the town for two and a half days, denying access to medical personnel who were trying to reach the injured.

In some cases, IPKF soldiers entered houses where people were taking refuge and shot them. twenty men, women, and children were sheltered in one house when IPKF soldiers stormed in. The sixty-year-old owner of the home said. "All of us then went forward raising our hands. I too went forward raising my hands and attempted to speak to the soldiers. But the soldiers started shooting. Those in front fell down." Among those murdered included a one-year-old boy and three pregnant women.<sup>12</sup>

Some prisoners died while in IPKF custody, apparently as a result of torture or deliberate shooting. Others were shot shortly after their release possibly by members of Tamil groups allied to the Indian troops. What follows are some examples:

Ariyaratnam Thandauthapany was reportedly arrested by the IPKF on 8 January 1988 while he was worshiping at a Murugan temple in Sivan Kovilady. On hearing on his arrest, his wife and children rushed to the Vaddukoddai

IPKF camp. On their way they saw Thandauthapany and three other prisoners being escorted by about twenty Indian soldiers. Thandauthapany was bleeding from injuries on his back. Two days later, Thandauthapany's family were told he would be released within three days. On 26 January, however, they were told that his whereabouts were unknown. On 10 February they were informally told by an IPKF officer that he had been murdered. The death certificate indicated that Thandauthapany died on 13 January 1988 in an IPKF action at Araly.

Vaithy Daniel, a worker at Kankesanthurai Cement Factory, was arrested at work on 5 February 1988 by soldiers from Tellippalai IPKF camp, according to relatives. The next morning his body was found at Crusher Junction, tied to a lamp post. There was a bullet wound in his head and lacerations on his back, forehead and neck. A doctor who examined the body said Daniel had probably died five hours before he was tied up and shot. A relative who had inquired at Tellippalai camp at 6:45pm on the day of the arrest was told that Daniel would be released the next day, following an inquiry. After the body was found, the relative was told by the same officer the Daniel had been released at 5pm on the day of his arrest. Then the relative reminded him that he had been there at 6:45pm that day, the officer changed his account of the release."

#### Sri Lanka: Northeast/"Disappearances"

Hundreds of Sri Lankans are known to have "disappeared" following arrest by the IPKF. At least two dozen have "disappeared" following arrest in the east by members of the Sri Lankan security forces. The majority of "disappearances" for which the IPKF were responsible occurred in Jaffna District between 1984 and 1987, the period of the IPKF occupation of Jaffna town. In some cases, members of Tamil groups allied with the Indians participated in the arrests. "Disappearances" attributed to the IPKF were also reported from Trincomalee, Vavuniya, and Amparai Districts. After

1987, fewer "disappearances" in the Northeast where reported. More than six hundred people had "disappeared" in the northeast following arrest by the Sri Lankan security forces, before IPKF deployed to Sri Lanka. Among these was a group of refugees arrested from Gopalapuram Refugee camp at Nolaveli, Trincomalee District, on 19 April 1987. The camp was surrounded at midnight by Sri Lankan army personnel, who turned out the lights and took away about ten men and children.<sup>14</sup>

#### Sri Lanka: The South

Many thousands of people were killed in Southern Sri Lanka between 1988 and 1990--perhaps thirty thousand. A significant proportion occurred in 1990 when government security forces, and so called vigilante groups apparently working on their behalf, were responsible for a mounting toll of extrajudicial executions and "disappearances". That same year also saw a rising number of attacks and killing by the JVP, to which the government attributed a total of over sixty-five hundred homicides. The government persistently denied that it sanctioned illegal killings by the security forces, claiming that police personnel only used lethal force in combat. The government promised to investigate--but the killings continued.<sup>15</sup>

### Sri Lanka: The South/Extrajudicial Executions

Executions occurred in several contexts: defenseless prisoners were deliberately murdered, unarmed demonstrators and curfew violators were shot, people in the vicinity of atrocities attributed to the JVP were killed in acts of reprisal, and, individuals were targeted for assassination--including JVP suspects, members of other opposition parties, journalists, lawyers and witnesses to violations committed by the army and police. In some cases there was sufficient information to establish that those killed had been in custody. Some extrajudicial executions were accomplished by uniformed members of the security forces. Others were committed by gun toting men wearing civilian clothing, who the government claimed were "vigilantes" acting outside its control; but none the less, in some cases, they were recognized as members of the army, police, or bodyguards of politicians from the ruling party. The regular attribution of political killing to "pro-government vigilante groups" is believed to have begun in March 1989 when the "Black Cats" were held responsible for numerous killings in Anuradhapura District. New "vigilante groups" proliferated, such as the "People's Red Revolutionary Army," "Eagles of the Central Hills," "Scorpion," and "Red Dragon." Posters were left by bodies in the name of such groups claiming responsibility for the deaths and sometimes including threats.

Hundreds of people are also suspected of having been abducted and murdered by armed men wearing civilian clothes. Again there is strong evidence to support the suggestion, widely believed in Sri Lanka, that in many cases these armed men were members of the regular security troops, sometimes directly linked to senior members of the ruling party.

Prisoners have been killed in custody or within hours of their arrest or abduction. In some cases, prisoners have been deliberately shot and killed. A young prisoner witnessed such an incident:

One of the prisoners of the group that had just been brought into the office. An Inspector shot him with his pistol in front of me.... One of the army officers who brought him said, 'He is a JVP supporter.' I was ordered to carry the body outside."

The same prisoner described how later that day he had heard the sound of many more prisoners being shot:

I heard them cry out, 'Please let me go! Don't kill me!' Then I heard shots.... I later found out that bodies were dumped all around the area. The body of the prisoner who was shot in front of me was seen... near Matara with other bodies. They had been burned, but in his case only he lower part of his body was burned."

The victims of extrajudicial executions have also included Buddhists monks killed in temples, and squads of police who have murdered JVP suspects instead of arresting them--even when the suspects are unarmed and offer no resistance. Several sources indicate relatives of suspects have been arrested as substitutes for the wanted person. They too have "disappeared" and been killed.

### Sri Lanka: The South/Torture

The torture of prisoners by members of the security forces has been widely reported in the south. The torture has sometimes been so severe that it has resulted in prisoners' deaths. The methods used reportedly included beatings on various parts of the body, including the feet and genitals, assaulting detainees while they are suspended from the ceiling, electric shocks and burning, including the penis; pulling out hair; and forcing chili powder into the anus, penis and mouth. Several former detainees have described a form of torture known as *dharma chakra* (wheel of Buddha's teaching) in which they were stripped naked and tied in a squatting position. A pole was passed under their knees from which they were suspended upside down. They were then rotated, causing injuries to their arms and legs, and beaten.

Men and women prisoners have reportedly been raped and male prisoners have said that they were forced to sexually abuse women prisoners. One sample of torture leading to death was the much publicized case of the lawyer Wijedasa Liyanarachchi. He was arrested by the police on 25 August 1988 and died eight days later. A postmortem report detailed over one hundred injuries on his body, "consistent with those seen in cases of police assaults." Among those tortured in detention have been Buddhist monks. A twenty-four year old monk, who was arrested by police in March 1990, and released

after twelve days following intervention of a member of parliament, subsequently described his ordeal:

I was beaten on my back. They tied my thumbs together and hung the rope over a bar that was across the ceiling. They pulled me up. My left shoulder was dislocated.... They were shouting things like, 'Dog, are you a monk? No, you are a dog.... We'll hang you and k'ill you.' They also put chili power in my anus, nose and eyes."

#### Sri Lanka: The South/"Disappearances"

Thousands of people have "disappeared" in custody in southern Sri Lanka in recent years after being detained by police or security units. Many are believed to have been killed within a short period, their bodies being dumped or secretly cremated. Most remain unaccounted for. In 1989 alone, more than three thousand people were initially reported to have "disappeared" in the South, but the actual count is suspected of being substantially higher." The great majority of the "disappeared" are young men. Students--especially those connected with student organizations suspected of links with the JVP--have been at particular risk of arrest. Buddhist monks are also among the "disappeared", as are people arrested as substitutes for a wanted relative. Many of the "disappeared" are from rural, poor communities which, for reasons of economic and social status, are believed by the authorities to be collectively sympathetic to the JVP.

As in the northeast, the fate of many people who "disappeared" remains unclear. In many cases the arrest--whether by uniformed police or unidentified armed groups--has



not been acknowledged by the police and nothing more has been heard from the person. Even when a prisoner was visited in custody, his safety has not been assured. In several cases prisoners whom that authorities have acknowledged holding have subsequently "disappeared" with their relatives being told that they had escaped. From 1990 to the present there has been a marked rise in the number of reported detentions, abductions, and killings carried out by groups of armed men wearing civilian clothes. They frequently abducted victims from their homes at night without indicating the basis of the detention or where the person was being taken. In some cases witnesses have recognized two plainclothes abductors. One woman described what happened to her husband in a sworn statement. On 14 September 1990, soon after midnight as she and her husband, mother and two children were sleeping, the woman heard the doors of her house being broken down. She got up to see two men with flashlights. One of them asked for her husband. When her mother turned on a light, the woman recognized one of the men as an inspector of police and the other as an officer of the same police station as the inspector."

Thereafter a few persons entered my house one by one... and took my husband out onto the road just outside the house.... We heard my husband shouting under assault. Just before my husband was taken my one and a half year old daughter cried and one of the police officers placed his gun in her mouth and shouted 'shut up!'"

Sri Lanka: The South/The Opposition

In 1971 an armed youth insurrection in the South against a coalition government under Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike was quickly suppressed. The insurrection was led by the JVP, a revolutionary Marxist party. The group was widely thought to have emerged because of the frustration experienced by educated youth owing to a lack of job opportunities. The JVP was among the three leftist parties outlawed by the government following widespread communal violence in 1983. The ban on the Communist Party and the New Socialist Party (NSSP) was quickly lifted, but it continued to apply to the JVP until mid 1988. The JVP vowed to use force and violence to overthrow the government. It continues today to operate as a clandestine party. The JVP uses its own terror tactics to achieve its agenda. The JVP was held responsible for several bomb attacks that killed numerous members of the police and security forces. Family members of police officers and security units have also been targets for kidnapping and assassination. Prominent broadcasters, senior figures in state owned corporations, book vendors selling publications "blacklisted" by the JVP and sellers of Indian goods were also murdered by the JVP. The bodies of many victims of the JVP were openly displayed as a warning to others. Some had posters beside them in the name of the JVP or its "armed wing" (the Patriotic Peoples's Movement). Other

victims of JVP terror were mutilated, sometimes with severed limbs or slashed sexual organs.

### El Salvador: Profile"

El Salvador lies on the Pacific Coast of Central America, seven hundred miles Northwest of the Panama Canal and eight hundred miles Southeast of Mexico City. It is the most densely populated of all Central American nations, with about six million inhabitants in an area of about eight thousand square miles (The size of Massachusetts). Sixty percent of the population lives in the countryside, where, until an attempt at land reform in 1980, two percent of Salvadorans owned sixty percent of the land." Its per capita income is lower than that of any country in the Western Hemisphere except Haiti. El Salvador, "The Savior," was given its name by Spanish conquerors led by Pedro de Alvarado, who invaded from Mexico in 1524. It took the Spaniards until 1547 to subdue the rebellious Indian population, descendants of the Aztecs and the Mayas. Most of the great Indian civilizations in that country were slaughtered by the Spanish. The greatest massacre took place in El Salvador in 1524, when over twenty-five thousand indians were killed." El Salvador declared its independence from Spain in 1821.

El Salvador's 1983 Constitution declares the country to be a democratic republic with elected presidents since 1984. The people elect an eighty-four member legislative body to

make laws. The country is divided into fourteen departments (states) each headed by an appointed president. The language is Spanish and religion is Roman Catholic. The capital is San Salvador, with a population of about half a million.

### El Salvador: Introduction

In its modern history, military rule in El Salvador dates from 1931 through 1979. For almost fifty years no civilians have occupied the highest executive office save in a provisional capacity, either to provide ornamentation to a military junta or to permit an officer to assume the presidency with a semblance of legitimacy.<sup>25</sup> By the late 1970s, two-thirds of the population received less than one-third the of disposable income in the nation. More than fifty percent of the country's peasants worked less than six months a year as wage laborers on commercial plantations, and had almost no access to land--either through renting or sharecropping--in the off season. Between 1961 and 1975, the number of landless peasants grew from eleven to forty percent of the rural population.<sup>26</sup>

The political situation also reflected decades of military rule. Military officers considered normal forms of petition and protest illegal, and they brutally suppressed all forms of dissent. Groups representing sectors that were excluded from participating in the government--peasants, workers, students and some types of professionals--began

boosting extra-systemic means to press their demands for better living conditions and access to the political arena. They occupied factories, seized land illegally, and staged peaceful sit-ins at foreign embassies. These activities were violently repressed by the armed forces, police, and death squads composed of both. In turn, groups of armed guerrillas adopted violent means in an attempt to overthrow a government that refused to permit reform.

In the spring and summer of 1979, a group of Salvadoran colonels, majors and captains carefully watched the unfolding political-military situation in Nicaragua. Sandinista guerrillas, together with rag-tag bands of youths and citizens, appeared to be defeating dictator Anastasio Somoza's National Guard. The Guardia was disbanded and fled by July of that year. The group of Salvadoran officers learned two important lessons: that too much officially sanctioned killing can produce revolutionary consequences, and the revolution meant the destruction of their military institution. Those same officers successfully launched their coup in October 1979. They turned to El Salvador's universities and opposition parties to form the country's first civilian-military junta in fifty years. Unfortunately, the lessons learned were forgotten; the practice of state terror never stopped. The new government was never able to reach a coalition with the different factions demanding a policy making role. The High Command and sectors of the Army and

security forces furthest to the right snubbed their nose at the junta and ordered a stepped up campaign of violence and repression on the premise of restoring "law and order." Successive coups changed leadership several times between 1979 and 1984. Christian Democrat Jose Napoleon Duarte, was voted in as president in 1984 in the first popular elected in over fifty years. Duarte's power opponent was Roberto D'Aubuisson, a career officer trained in Panama and the International Police Academy in Washington D.C. He became a Major in the National Guard but was thrown out of the army in the 1979 coup. D'Aubuisson was considered to be the most notorious torture and death squad leader in El Salvador.' During the U.S. backed 1982 elections, he became the president of the National Assembly. He was also the leader of the ultraconservative and paramilitary party ARENA--the Nationalist Republic Alliance. Major D'Aubuisson, now deceased, has been described by Robert White, former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, as "a pathological killer," and is widely known as "Major Soplete" ("Major Blowtorch"), because of his alleged involvement in death squad operations.' Duarte decided not to run for office again in 1989, permitting the prevailing president, Alfredo Christiani, to be voted into office in a landslide election.

#### El Salvador: Death Squad Operations

Over forty thousand Salvadorans are estimated to have been killed in political violence in El Salvador since the 1979 coup until 1984." There are accounts published as recently as 1991 stating dead squads are still in operation. Amnesty International believes a large proportion of those killed were the victims of extrajudicial executions by government military and security forces. However, the exact number of deaths due to violence is unknown, and the precise percentage of these which should be categorized as extrajudicial execution is difficult to specify as the many thousands of violent deaths since 1979 have never been satisfactorily investigated by the Salvadoran authorities, nor have their perpetrators been brought to justice.

Members of Salvadoran death squads customarily wear plain clothes and make use of trucks or vans with tinted windows and without license plates. They are chillingly efficient. Victims are sometimes shot from passing cars, in broad daylight, and in front of eye witnesses. At other times, victims are seized in their homes or on the streets and their bodies found abandoned far from the scene. Some join the long list of the "disappeared" and are never heard from again. Often attacks and abductions have taken place in close proximity to major police or military installations, or under the gaze of uniformed security personnel who made no effort to intervene on the victim's behalf.

Even death squad names are chosen to instill fear. Some of the names devised for Salvadoran death squads in recent years have included: The Secret Communist Army (ESA); The White Hand Death Squad; The Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Brigade, named after the Salvadoran general who ordered the massacre of an estimated thirty thousand peasants in 1932 in the wake of an uprising; and the White Warriors Union. Table 3.1 lists the Salvadoran agencies responsible for death squad activity. The data may be dated, however, but the current reports indicate the police and military organizations involved remain active today.

As part of the Salvadoran death squad method of operations, bodies are dumped along road sides in full view of the public, or in body dumps (*Botaderos De Cadaveres*). One notorious body dumping ground is a lava bed about twelve miles north of the capital, called El Playon. Skulls and skeletons of bodies, devoured by birds of prey, scattered in the decomposing rubbish were a common sight there in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1982, the independent human rights monitoring group Christian Legal Aid (SJC), stated that during that year at least two hundred bodies had been found at El Playon." The site fell into disuse as a death squad dumping ground for some years but may be reused at anytime in the future.

Among methods used by the Salvadoran death squads to intimidate their victims is the publication of threats in



advertisements in the national press. For example, threats were made against members of the General Association of Salvadoran University Students, as reported in the Salvadoran press in July 1987, while in March 1988 the San Salvadoran daily El Mundo reported that it had received a communique from another notorious death squad, The Salvadoran Anti-communist Guild. It declared that "Salvadorans have traditionally been anti-communists and have affiliated themselves to opposition political parties which are nationalist, anti-communist and anti-internationalist."''

Official statements in the media accusing an individual of belonging to or sympathizing with the armed opposition movement, appear to give a green light for death squad action to eliminate the branded person. Such statements are often interpreted as a death warrant. Mario Zamora, a member of the Christian Democratic Party, a former Attorney General, was shot dead in his bathroom, two days after D'Aubuisson labelled him on Salvadoran television as a guerrilla collaborator. At that time, Major D'Aubuisson appeared weekly on Salvadoran television announcing the identity of "subversives" who often fell victim shortly afterwards to the death squad. Threats in the name of a particular death squad are also made by telephone or in anonymous notes, warning intended victims to leave the country or stop their activities. Coffins have sometimes been delivered to the homes of people targeted for intimidation and an atmosphere of terror created by the death

squad-style of killing and mutilating victims in the most macabre way. Victims are customarily found mutilated, decapitated, dismembered, strangled or showing marks of torture, or rape.

\* \* \* \* \*

Table 3.1

Responsible for Murders, January-December 1981<sup>11</sup>

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Jan-Mar</u>	<u>Apr-Jun</u>	<u>Jul-Sep</u>	<u>Oct-Dec</u>	<u>Total</u>
Combined Forces*	3846	2387	284	672	7189
Death Squad**	0	33	96	17	146
Plain Clothes Agents	21	32	16	20	100
National Guard	3	46	59	12	120
Treasury Police	0	38	12	1	51
Army	0	23	5	12	40
National Police	0	14	2	0	16
Committee for Civil Defense	0	0	0	11	11
Unidentified Paramilitary Groups	1599	1197	1125	907	4828
Total	5469	3781	5380	1652	12,501

SOURCE: Report of the Legal Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, 1982.

\*Joint operations by units of the Salvadoran Army, National Guard, Police, and Treasury Police.

\*\*Independent units not identified as being part of other organizations listed

\* \* \* \* \*

El Salvador: Defector's Testimony

A former Salvadoran National Police officer, now living in the U.S. recently admitted his involvement in a death squad:

I was introduced to two undercover, or plainclothes officers. I was told that these persons were my new associates on the job. I was told, 'They are your father, mother, child, they are your everything.' They told me I was now a member of a government death squad. From that moment by life changed completely. I could not see my wife and children any more except for five minutes in the middle of the night. My wife and children were placed under surveillance.

One day I was ordered to go to a certain address. We seized and put him (The victim) into his own car and my superior told us "I have a good place for this man." He was talking about a dry well located near a cross roads leading to the district of Las Pacitas. There were four of us and he had his arms tied behind him and he was blindfolded. He was taken inside the gate at the well, and he was thrown into the well. My superior said there were more than fifteen bodies at the bottom of the well.

I told my superior that my job was not to murder people. The three officers with me grabbed me. My superior took out his pistol and hit me across the face with it. He told me, '...you will work with us, or we will kill your wife and kids.' I fled my country with my family at the first opportunity."

A former Salvadoran army doctor, who had treated many Salvadoran army members injured when carrying out death squad activities, testified to Congress:

The death squads operate independently of the security forces. They are made up of members of the security forces and acts of terrorism credited to these squads, such as political assassinations, kidnappings and indiscriminate murder, are, in fact, planned by high-ranking military officers and carried out by members of the security forces."

A defector from the Treasury Police testified about a secret killing missions undertaken by specially trained police

units. He stated that those assigned to kill specific individuals always dressed in civilian clothes when carrying out their missions and obscured their identities. Often they dressed in a particular way in order to be able to approach their targets. Those assigned to carry out killings in the university for example, would dress like students, carry notebooks and wear spectacles. Special books were used by these agents to hide the guns they carried when on such assignments. Sometimes agents wore bandanas or carried literature to suggest that they were members of the opposition.

#### El Salvador: Extrajudicial Executions

Death squad executions continue unabated. Civilians, especially peasants (campesinos) continue to be the primary targets, particularly in rural areas in or near conflict zones, where victims are not armed. Table 3.2, again the data is not current, illustrates the kinds of "professions" being murdered. The occupation of death squad victim has not changed, only the numbers. Most victims are killed in places other than where they are abandoned and often show signs of having been brutally tortured, including multiple stab wounds, the removal of eyes, scalp or other parts of the body, broken bones and other injuries. Identity cards are removed to obstruct identification but in some cases bodies have been subsequently recognized.

\* \* \* \* \*

Table 3.2

## Extrajudicial Executions, January-December 1981''

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Jan-Mar</u>	<u>Apr-Jun</u>	<u>Jul-Sep</u>	<u>Oct-Dec</u>	<u>Total</u>
Peasants*	1713	2155	383	872	5123
Workers	104	131	107	45	387
Students	111	150	56	19	346
Employees	185	183	142	74	554
Teachers	28	16	10	8	62
Small Business Owners	41	56	45	61	203
Professionals	13	7	4	2	26
Clergy	0	3	3	0	6
Journalists	0	2	0	0	2
Health Workers	7	1	1	0	9
Unknown Professions	3267	1067	878	571	5783
<hr/>					
TOTALS	5469	3781	1599	1653	12,501

SOURCE: Report of the Legal Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, 1982.

\*Numbers do not include 3400 peasants massacred in major operations by the Salvadoran Army in Sumpul, Trifinio, San Vicente (Tonita's village, see Chapter 1), and Morazan.

\* \* \* \* \*

Death squads, armed men in plain clothes usually working in groups of two or three, have shot victims dead in their homes or on the street in public. On August 4, 1990, two armed men in plainclothes drove up to the home of thirty-four

year old Jorge Alberto Perez, entered his house, and shot him four times in the chest before leaving. In another case, in July of that year, a plainclothes individual knocked at the house of Marina Mahana in San Miguel, telling her he had a message for her. When she came to the door he shot her at point blank range before driving away in a dark-windowed vehicle (without license plates), accompanied by two other men in plainclothes who were waiting for him. The man who fired the shots had reportedly been seen previously in San Miguel on at least two other occasions wearing an army uniform."

#### El Salvador: "Disappearances"

Cases of long term "disappearance" have been frequently reported in the past. Authorities have failed to clarify the whereabouts of the detainees or to ascertain who was responsible. In many cases, the police continue to deny most of the "disappeared" were ever arrested, in spite of several occasions when there were witnesses observed the abduction by uniformed police or military. A typical case is that of trade unionists Sara Medina and Juan Chavez. The two were abducted in a street in San Salvador on 19 August 1990 in front of several witnesses who knew them by their uniforms as members of the Army. In spite of the fact that a Treasury Police official told Sara's mother several days later that her daughter had been arrested by the Army; the Army itself denied the two arrests.

Others have "disappeared" following abduction in death squad operations usually by gun carrying men in civilian clothing. The similarity of operating methods used by those responsible and the fact that no one had been found responsible for any of these abductions gives weight to the belief that the captors were linked to the security forces. Allegations of a connection with the security forces are strengthened by the fact that, in some cases, arrests by armed men in plain clothes in similar circumstances have subsequently been formally recognized and the detainee taken to an official police detention center. Among the "disappearance" cases reported to Amnesty International in 1991 is that of Humberto Reyes, a forty-three year old bread workers union leader. On 16 January 1991, three men dressed in civilian clothing entered his home in Santa Ana saying they wanted to talk to him. They took him away, handcuffed, in a vehicle with dark windows; and he has remained "disappeared" since that time."

In a few "disappearance" cases the body of the "disappeared" detainee has been found eventually but no one has been prosecuted. This occurred in the case of the discovery of an unidentified body found in the Canton Llano Grande. The body was exhumed on 5 May 1990 and identified as that of sixteen year old Jose Castillo. A forensic examination showed he had died of bullet wounds from a high caliber weapon. Jose Acosta had been arrested by uniformed

soldiers in June of 1990, together with his father and brother. Three days later, relatives finally located the father in prison and the brother in a juvenile detention center. Soldiers of the Bellosa Battalion who had initially held the three denied on 21 June that Jose Acosta was in detention and he remained "disappeared" until the exhumation on 19 July. According to reports, Acosta had been separated from his brother and father on 5 June. At the time, soldiers reportedly said he was being taken out to the mountains to point out guerrilla camps.

On very rare occasions "disappeared" detainees have been released after being held for weeks in secret detention centers. A group of detainees, among them a student leader and a trade unionist arrested in August 1991, described how they were abducted by armed individuals in civilian clothing and held in unacknowledged detention for three to eight weeks before being released. They said they were held in clandestine detention centers where they were interrogated about links to opposition groups and subjected to severe torture, including electric shock and beating. Several factors suggested that the detentions were linked to the military or security forces, including the manner in which the captors operated, the equipment used, the identification of one of the captors and his vehicle as belonging to the Second Brigade, and the sighting of another vehicle used in one of the abductions at a police barracks."



### El Salvador: Torture

The most common methods of torture and ill-treatment include suspension by the feet or from a rope tied around the wrists or thumbs bound together behind the back, sleep and food deprivation for several days, severe beatings with sticks and whips, immersion of the head in water, cigarette burns, repeated strenuous exercises sometimes with weights on the shoulders, electric shock, drugs, sexual humiliation and rape. Many were subjected to the *capucha*, a hood placed over the head, often filled with lime, which causes suffocation. An example is the case of Francisco Campos:

Francisco Baltazar Campos will never forget the bus ride he took on October 25, 1988. He was arrested at La Union and taken to National Guard headquarters in San Miguel where he was interrogated and beaten. For twenty-eight days Campos was shuffled between several security barracks. Campos was forced to confess that he was a member of the revolutionary organization FPL. His captors also tried to extract information on 'subversives.' 'We have ways of making you talk.' they threatened. One day he was dragged into an interrogation room and his head was covered with a plastic bag. His captors slowly tightened a cord around the bottom of the bag at his neck. They made Campos stand, then threw powerful punches to his stomach. When he gasped for air, the plastic bag compressed against his face. After each blow he would gasp, the bag smothering his nostrils and sealing his mouth. He struggled frantically for air, finally losing consciousness and collapsing in a heap on the floor.

Not satisfied with Campos' answers, his interrogator resorted to other forms of torture. His testicles were forced into a bag of ice and freezing water. When they were thoroughly chilled, the bag was repeatedly jerked downward. Needle-like pain shot from his scrotum throughout his whole body. On another occasion, Campos suffered great searing pain when a thick metal rod was inserted into his rectum. Electric shocks were applied to his body.

Campos was always kept nude and his hands and feet were firmly handcuffed to an iron bed each night. He was unable to scratch, drink, eat, or urinate. His captors told him that he would be set free, but he added, 'First we need to give you an injection of vitamins.' After the liquid shot into his vein, Campos felt dizzy and helpless, his muscle control gone. He was stuffed into a car and driven to a place near Arce, where he was dumped. Barely conscious, he realized that several charges of dynamite were beside his head and the fuses were lit. He rolled sideways into the safety of a small ditch just before the dynamite exploded. He was lucky. the death squad rarely makes mistakes."

Often a combination of physical and psychological pressure is used to force the detainee to collaborate. A twenty-five year old peasant farmer arrested described how he was treated by the National Police. He was released without charge after three days.

One of the interrogators grabbed my hair and kicked me, cutting the skin. The next blow was to the stomach, then a punch in the mouth, cutting the inside of my lip. They all told me that I had to die, that no one had asked for me, neither my family nor organizations working on behalf of detainees. Because I was blindfolded no one had recognized me on the way to the detention center, so they could make me disappear and no one would realize. They kept saying that the only way out would be to admit (to their accusations) or die there of hunger.... One of them tied my thumbs and hands together, stood on a bench and lifted my arms above my head, pulling them apart until my finger went numb. Then they took turns raping me and inserting batons and other things in my rectum. One tried to stick his penis in my mouth after he finished raping me. I starting screaming. Another one tied a rag over my mouth to stop the screams. Then they threw me to the floor and one of them stood on my feet and began to jump up and down, pulling my arms backwards. After about ten minutes, they pulled me up by my hair, telling me that now I had to admit I was a guerrilla."

Salvadoran medical professionals are believed to be involved in assisting the torturers. One former detainee held by police in 1991 said:

...two other persons entered into the room and introduced themselves as doctors. they examined me, and checked me all over. One of them said to me that 'you must put up with this.... There is nothing we can do.' I was cold and coughing. They said, 'You must get through this.' Then they both left. After this, his interrogators began to give him electric shocks on his nipples, testicles, and in his mouth. Several times he was thrown in a tank of water through which an electric current was passed."

The case of the treasurer of a cooperative arrested in April 1990 also illustrated the role of some medical personnel in detention centers. He stated, while held by the military, he had been stripped, blindfolded, repeatedly hit on his chest, upper arms and legs. His toes were smashed with the butt of a machine gun. On being transferred to a police headquarters he was examined by a doctor because, he believed, the authorities feared he might have been suffering from heart problems or broken bones as a result of the torture. However, when the medical examination showed that this was not the case, he was told by the doctor not to worry. The pain was only from the torture. And that he was strong enough for much more."

### Interviews

This researcher conducted interviews with individuals who lived and worked in countries identified as having death squad activity. Although the interview summaries and direct quotations are most likely very truthful and accurate, as with any uncorroborated source, the reader must remain somewhat

skeptical. The following interviews were conducted on 18 July 1992, in Sacramento and San Francisco.

Interview: Anne Morrison"

Anne is from the northern highlands of Scotland. She is a registered nurse currently working for the British Health Ministry in London. Between 1978 and 1990, she spent five and a half years working in hospitals in Jeddah, Medina, and Jubail, Saudi Arabia. During her tour, she witnessed several acts of state terror. In the course of her duties she treated victims of torture and abuse by police.

One particular incident Anne related occurred in Medina during the Haj (Islamic Holy Pilgrimage Week) in 1987. The Saudis had anticipated that particular year Iran would attempt to cause an incident to embarrass the Saudi Royal Family. Thus the Police were out in force "and were especially brutal." While on duty as a nursing supervisor one evening during the Haj, she was ordered to prepare to receive mass casualties from one of the holy shrine areas. Although Anne was never told the reason, she had heard from the emergency room there had been a "riot" and the Saudi police had attacked religious pilgrims. Police vans had pulled up outside the hospital. Eighty individuals, mostly Iranians, were brought in suffering from broken bones, lacerations, and head injuries. "The type of injuries that would be consistent with being struck with a riot baton." She indicated the police

continued to assault the injured in the emergency room. "I saw a Saudi policemen hit a patient with his baton hard enough to break the man's leg. I was warned not to interfere otherwise I could have been attacked by the police as well."

In questioning Anne about incidents other than the Haj, she was asked about treating people brought in by the police.

Quite often they (detainees) had come in from the local police station with unexplained injuries (lacerations, bruises, fractures, rope burns, whip marks, etc.) that the doctors would say were caused by force. We had quite a few women arrive from the local police station practically dead. They had been raped and beaten by the Saudi Police. Most of these women were Indian, Indonesian, and Sri Lankan. One girl had been brutally raped and thrown out of a fourth floor window. It was a well known fact in Saudi (Arabia) that the police were the biggest rapists in the country. Nothing would be done about it (prosecution of police) since the women were foreigners and considered by Saudi men as whores.

All those who had been brought in by the police were kept in a special ward under armed guard. They were shackled to the bed. For minor crimes just one hand. For more severe crimes all four limbs were shackled. The only time they were unlocked was if the person needed to use the toilet. For some crimes, such as alcohol or drug offenses, even if they were badly injured, they were dragged out of the bed by the police and taken away before their injuries had healed. There was nothing we could do about it. If I would have said anything about what I had seen, I would have been fired and deported immediately.

Saudi Arabian police were known to perform countless "disappearances." Anne mentioned one incident:

We had a Sudanese woman working in the hospital as a nurses aid. She apparently, on the side, was doing a bit of prostitution. She "disappeared" one night. The woman was eventually traced to the womens prison. Our employers tried to do something about it. But the next time, about a week later, when he (Anne's supervisor) went to the prison she was nowhere to be found and no records of her anywhere. To this day I do not know what happened to her.

Interview: James Wengenroth/Saudi Arabia"

James is from Sacramento. He has just returned this year from a five year tour in Saudi Arabia. He was stationed first at the International Airport in Jeddah as a paramedic lieutenant attached to the fire rescue service. Later he was transferred to the El-Fanateer Hospital in Jubail as chief paramedic in charge of the ambulance rescue section.

James states that in 1987, during the Haj, he was the duty officer working on the airport side. He indicated all the Iranian casualties treated at the hospital (where Anne worked) had been escorted by Saudi police to a secure portion of the airport tarmac for deportation aboard Iranian aircraft. James remarked he had counted over two hundred casualties--including women and old men. He had seen over three hundred dead, killed by shooting, that had been brought to the tarmac for shipment to Iran. "The police were continually harassing and assaulting the injured up until they were turned over to Iranian officials."

When asked what his experiences were regarding the Saudi police or military in committing acts of torture, he said:

In 1991, one of my ambulance drivers (a Yemeni) was moonlighting as a taxi driver. One day he picked up two Pakistanis and drove them to Damomh. When he came back two Saudis approached him and said 'would you take us to Damomh?' The passenger said 'first we go around the corner.' The Yemeni drove them as instructed and was immediately arrested by plain clothes agents of the drug police (Saudi equivalent to the U.S. DEA). He was then blindfolded, taken to the drug prison in Damomh, where for seven days he was held without being allowed to

notify his employer or family. While in the prison, he was put in a room with bright lights. Pakistanis were brought in one at a time. My Yemeni driver was asked if he recognized any of the "suspects" as one of the two he took to Damomh. When he said no he was beaten until he said yes.

After several hours of this 'line up,' he was put in a large holding cell with other prisoners. I have seen this cell myself on a visit to pick up an injured jailer. All in the cell were required to face the wall standing up. Usually two hours standing, one hour squatting or sitting. At periods of time the guard would come in and order the prisoners to (rapidly) squat then sit, then squat again. When their response was not quick, the prisoners were taken out and beaten with electrical cable. We started searching for the Yemeni when he failed to show for work. We were afraid he would "disappear" before we could get him out. We had managed to get him out. He had to be treated for lacerations and bruises on the back, buttocks and face. There were cigarette burns on his testicles.

When asked about witnessing any heinous Saudi police activity, James indicated he had been dispatched on occasion to the local police station to retrieve men and women who, by the extent of their injuries, had been severely beaten and raped. He reiterated a standard operating procedure of the Saudi police:

It was very common practice of the uniformed police in Riyadh (federal capital) to take a low level foreign male worker, usually Sri Lankan, Filipino, or Indian, load them up in a police car, drive the victim out in the middle of nowhere, have anal intercourse with him, then shoot him in the head. Sometimes the police would not bother to shoot their victim; they'll just leave him in the desert.

James went on to say that Saudi police officers are sometimes arrested for rape and imprisoned. Those rare cases occurred only where the individual officer was not "well connected" and had "embarrassed" someone of importance.

"There are some good Saudi police officers." On the other hand, "if your cousin was a secretary to a member of the royal family, he can pretty much rape and pillage all you want. The police would be foolish to interfere."

Interview: James Wengenroth/Kuwait<sup>45</sup>

For his part in the gulf war, James led an combat support expedition of six ambulances and a dozen paramedics into Kuwait just behind the coalition combat forces, just prior to the Kuwait army taking full control of the country. He observed armed Kuwaiti vigilantes rounding up "Iraqi sympathizers" and Palestinians, usually extrajudiciously executing them on the spot. James witnessed at least a dozen such killings. When the Kuwaiti army returned to their homeland, they set up check points and routinely removed non-Kuwaitis from their cars, beating them--and shooting some as reprisals.

Interview: James Wengenroth/Afghanistan<sup>46</sup>

Prior to his service in Saudi Arabia, James served as a combat paramedic instructor in 1986, supporting the Mujahadeen resistance fighters along the Afghan/Pakistan border region near the city of Pershawa (in Paktia Province). He worked closely with human rights organizations operating in the area aiding the thousands of refugees fleeing the Soviet occupation



forces. And addition to teaching, he assisted in treating victims of military actions and torture. He related:

One particularly horrid method used by the Soviets that I saw personally (was against) the (Afghan) children; they (Soviet military intelligence, GRU) would come into a village (in Afghanistan) looking for the whereabouts of the local Mujahadeen. When they didn't get answers, they'd take the children, douse them with kerosine, and set them on fire in front of their parents.

During the course of his duties, since he could speak some Farsi, James would interview wounded Mujahadeen brought to Pakistan for treatment. When asked about some of the testimony regarding Soviet atrocities, he stated:

A common story would be (for the Soviet regular army) to go into a (Afghan) village, round up the women, children, and elderly, and push them into the village mosque, hold them there with machine guns, then light the mosque on fire. And then machine gun anyone who came out.

The Soviets systematically targeted hospitals and clinics in Afghanistan for bombing. Health care professionals were routinely arrested, "disappeared," or outright executed. Diseases that had been eliminated, such as malaria and polio were making a rapid comeback at the time I was there. The Soviets were using disease and the denial of primary health care as a tool to promote genocide.

On a different subject, James said the Afghan secret police, the *Hafadh* (the Afghan version of the KGB) would regularly slip across the border into Pakistan to conduct extrajudicial executions of Mujahadeen. "Apparently several mid-level Mujahadeen had been beheaded, their severed heads were transported back to Afghanistan for verification and public display." James exclaimed he had a bounty on his life.

"The Soviets and Hafadh worked on a bounty system. Americans captured or killed had a bounty of one thousand U.S. dollars. The reward was paid to anyone helping the Mujahadeen. And it didn't matter what side of the border you were on. I know of two Austrian doctors who were murdered in their quarters in Pakistan not far from where I worked. Needless to say, I was heavily armed at all times. Some of the types living in this part of the world would kill their mothers for a thousand bucks." He asserted the bounty was an attempt to discourage aid by western countries. James implied the bounty may have been the reason a sizable Dutch contingent departed while he was in Pakistan.

The Mujahadeen practiced their own form of terror on Soviet army prisoners or those Afghans they thought were Soviet informers. James has received reports of Soviets being skinned alive.

A common practice, and I have talked to a French doctor who witnessed it, was a game the Mujahadeen would play called *Bustashi*. That is the game where two horsemen would ride around trying to pull apart a calf. Only they would use a Soviet officer instead. It was done for entertainment, mostly to Soviet officers, helicopter pilots and Afghans suspected of being Soviet sympathizers.

#### Victim Rehabilitation

So much has been reveled in this thesis of the cruelty inflicted by man upon his fellow man. The number of victims affected has been reported to be in the tens of thousands annually.<sup>47</sup> One of the best known authors on the subject

estimated the total number of torture victims to be between hundreds of thousands and millions." Torture is, after all, illegal. Yet more than sixty countries are known to use torture as a form of social control." But what of the few that are tortured and maimed at the hands of the death squad and survive? Where can they turn too for help to heal the physical and emotional wounds? The final part of this chapter will briefly discuss what is being done for the death squad survivor. The rehabilitation efforts are not near enough; however, such programs are a positive step.

A victim rehabilitation researcher, Dr. Federico Allodi, describes that the care for the torture victim begins with a medical examination." Most researchers in this area stress that the clinical environment and medical procedures must be toned down since, in some countries, doctors have participated in torture." The physical scrutiny should include documenting all physical injuries, such as scars from burns and cuts. A complete dental exam is part of the process as well as X-rays for any fractures or internal injuries. Some treatment techniques come from the studies of Nazi Holocaust survivors and Vietnam veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Studies have concluded that at least fifty percent of refugees" and seventy percent of torture victims suffer from PTSD. The process for psychotherapy of torture victims must include: "the establishment of trust or alliance between patient and therapist; grief reaction and mourning for the

loss of loved persons; in the case of refugees, the anxiety felt over being force to abandon ones country and culture; denial and avoidance both on the part of victim and therapist; countertransference and over identification reactions from therapists culturally and ideologically distant or too close to their patients; survivor guilt and the survivor's mission or the attempt to repair the damage done, individually or within a social group."

When treating the torture victims medical, mental, psychological needs, professionals stress not to overlook the fundamental daily needs that aid in the overall return to normalcy for the survivor. For some victims, there may be pressing needs for food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. Some victims experience difficulty in performing even the most simple tasks. "One victim did not know how to open a door because he had not been allowed to do so for thirteen years; nor was he able to make a dark room light by throwing the light switch." Another victim reflexively removed her clothes when she was in the presence of other people because this was what she had been forced to do repeatedly. One surprise was that the "Stockholm Syndrome" was never observed in the victims."

Another article" warns the therapist to be careful of their personal feelings and reactions to the sensational stories they will here. "Clinicians may experience an almost phobic reaction to hearing the details of the torture. (They

could)...find themselves intensely curious and eager to press for details."" There is even a voyeur interest by some, the fascination with the details of acts of torture." Those working with victims of torture may feel guilty or "...a regret and discomfort at not having previously acknowledged and addressed more actively the practice of torture."" The results of this type of care are mixed. "Studies have shown that although most populations tend to benefit from treatment, some, such as Cambodian victims of torture, frequently tend to show few benefits. Treatment of torture victims is a relatively new field."" But the work continues. Some specific programs have been very successful.

One effort described" was started in 1985 when a group of health professionals in Britain set up the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Director Helen Bamber emphasizes the need for special provision for survivors. "They may have had terrible experiences with doctors involved in torture." The Foundation uses an integrated approach to treating the torture victim, providing medical treatment, social work and psychotherapy. By 1986, the Foundation had seventy-five clients. They estimate the number will climb into the thousands in the near future. Most survivors visiting the Foundation start the healing process with a medical consultation. "The objective verification of their suffering can be an important step in the process of recovery for many people," states Dr. Bamber. The bulk of

treatment consists of individual, family and group psychotherapy to those wanting it and are ready to unburden their experience, reaffirming their ability to heal themselves.

The most widely known is the pioneering International Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims in Copenhagen. The center was opened in 1983 and financed by a combination of government and private contributions. The ambiance of the center is very low key. Doctors in white coats, sterile waiting rooms, and high-technology diagnostic equipment are taboo. A hospital atmosphere could trigger agonizing memories of other doctors who tortured patients or stood by while they were brutally interrogated, intervening only to patch them up so the torture could continue." Dr. Inge Genefka, the center's medical director, indicates that torture patients commonly display psychological problems such as irritability, anxiety, memory lapses, and have difficulty concentrating.

The psychiatrists and psychologists at the center use methods (mentioned earlier) borrowed from those used to help survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, rape victims, and Vietnam veterans. Patients are very carefully encouraged to relive the terror of their torture and vent emotions that they have had to bottle up. They are encouraged to display fury at the humiliation of being tortured, to help expunge deep seated feelings of guilt at having survived when others died. Therapists at the center do not use the standard hospital

equipment because they could further traumatize patients who were frequently bound, wired, and electrically shocked. Instead, massage is used to help relieve pain. "Some patients refuse, at first, to take off their clothes," says Inge Bloch, a physiotherapist. "They know that stripping has been a prelude to pain. Others panic if they are touched suddenly or approached from behind." The center's medical team has taught its techniques around the world, sometimes secretly to health professionals in countries where torture is commonplace. After an average stay of one year, about ninety percent of the patients are able to live out their lives normally.

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## Chapter 4

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Summary

The purpose of this thesis has been to provide an overview of state terrorism and the death squad in order to increase understanding and awareness of the entire phenomenon beyond that reported in the popular media. Since there must exist a certain climate fostering a death squad policy, this undertaking discussed, at length, state terrorism, beginning with its long history, illustrating mankind has used state terror since the debut of organized civilization, refining it to peak efficiency by the twentieth century. Also discussed were the processes and actions of governments using terror to oppress, and, their instruments of terror--police, military, and of course the death squad.

The death squad itself was examined. Its background, the short history, as well as the distinct classes and composition of squads used in different parts of the world. Also discussed were the various general activities performed by death squads: extrajudicial executions, torture, "disappearances," and genocide. Throughout each section, testimony of participants and victims were included to portray the sense of terror being inflicted. Particularly vivid was the small portion on how one is "trained" to be part of a death squad. In addition, a review and analysis of the victim, including a brief comment on victimology and its

application to the death squad victim. The portion of the review on victims focused on the murder of children as death squad victims, as represented by the actions of Brazilian death squads killing thousands of children.

This thesis portrayed in greater detail two countries using death squads as part of their policy. The case studies of Sri Lanka and El Salvador were subdivided to investigate in greater detail the hallmark of death squad actions e.g. extrajudicial executions, torture, etc. Interwoven into the country studies were explanations of the processes and actions following each "step" of the death squad phenomenon. That is, a country profile and brief history, death squad operations, etc.

To add to this undertaking, this researcher was fortunate to be able to interview two individuals who personally witnessed state terrorism in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. Their testimony spoke of death squad activity very similar in nature to, and aiding in the corroboration of, the testimony scattered throughout this thesis. And finally, there are those who survive the death squad. The concluding segment of this study looked at torture victim rehabilitation, how it is done and where, to help the tens of thousands who have endured the death squad--and lived.

### Conclusions

Unfortunately, the conclusions are clear. As mentioned earlier, state terror has a long history. The term death squad may be only thirty or so years old but the use of legitimate authority (police or military) by a state to rape, torture, and murder its citizens has been a policy since organized governments came into being. It appears to be in our nature as the highest form of life on this planet for the strong to conquer the weak in the insatiable quest for power. But not just a simple conquest, rather the weak must suffer horrible agony, reimbursing the state with their lives. A lengthy review of the literature--as well as just reading today's newspaper--must lead one to conclude that death squads are still with us and remain a viable policy choice of many countries. Furthermore, the use of extrajudicial execution, torture, "disappearance," and genocide will continue. Such organizations as Amnesty International, the United Nations, and hundreds of other human rights groups around the world have attempted in vain to raise the world conscience to the death squad phenomenon. An astute reader would conclude that the world at large, in particular the world powers, are simply not interested. Moreover, since many of the squads are composed of police personnel, that fact alone should prompt world law enforcement organizations to speak out against their professional colleagues who wantonly torture and kill the innocent. Unfortunately, such prestigious organizations will

continue to hold meetings and conventions in such places as China, embracing them as "fellow honorable officers."

Because the world is not outraged enough to put an end to the carnage, this researcher must conclude that the death squad will continue to spread destruction at the will of their keepers.

### Recommendations

First there must be more research done by scholars in the criminal justice community. Police officers and military personnel are the primary culprits in this phenomenon. Are they victims or are they willing participants? Research should examine nations, using death squads that belong to professional criminal justice organizations; what support do such organizations give to repressive regimes on its rolls? What are the policies in practice regarding member nations with death squads? This researcher recommends those organizations make their stance clear and on the record. The criminal justice community can have impact if it is forceful enough.

Amnesty International outlines its recommendations that are pertinent to this thesis:

1. The authorities should order an impartial inquiry into all allegations of torture. Criminal proceedings should be initiated in cases where there is evidence of involvement in torture. Victims of torture should receive redress and compensation.
2. The authorities should initiate an impartial and independent inquiry into reports of thousands of

extrajudicial executions by police, military, or death squads. The findings of this inquiry should be made public and criminal proceedings brought against those found responsible. Victims' families should receive redress and compensation for the deaths.

3. The authorities should be urged to affirm their commitment to respect human rights by adhering to the various accords on human rights. Especially the United Nations Convention Against Torture.'

Included should be an accountability of all who have "disappeared." Their status should be verified and relatives notified. If the "disappeared" person is dead, his death should be investigated.

Of course the guidelines listed by Amnesty International may only be "wishful thinking," considering the history of some regimes using state terror. But changes can be made. The best recommendation rests with you, the reader. Hopefully this thesis has enlightened you. And maybe caused anger and disgust. Speak out at any forum that will listen. Affiliate with a human rights organization or a criminal justice organization that has a firm human rights stand; and, condemn those that do not. Question the criminal justice community about death squads. Research and spread the word. All movements begin with one step. If your actions save one life your efforts are more than rewarded.



## NOTES

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ABSTRACT  
of  
STATE TERRORISM AND THE DEATH SQUAD:  
A STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON  
by  
William Anthony Lavelle

Statement of Problem

Regimes around the globe are conducting wholesale homicide of its citizens. The problem is widespread. Presently, this form of State sanctioned terrorism is the policy of at least thirty countries. Over the previous fifteen years at least two million have been extrajudiciously executed; and there is little evidence the situation has improved. The causality of death squads stems from government response to challenges (perceived or real). Frequently regimes reinterpret the challenge as being directed towards the state, justifying the use of any means at the disposal of the government. The most direct plan of action in response is to put these countries under concentrated public scrutiny, compelling them to abolish their death squad or face sanction.

There is a need to advance this issue in all forums--especially criminal justice.

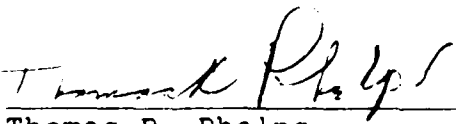
### Sources of Data

The data for the thesis was obtained from an extensive review of the relevant literature taken from scholarly research, periodicals, books, popular articles, and writings published by the alternative press that deal with specific areas in the field of state terrorism, i.e., extrajudicial executions, death squads, torture, "disappearances," genocide, and torture victim rehabilitation. Information was examined largely from the fields of Criminal Justice, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, as well as the documented investigations conducted by human rights organizations, for an overall insight of the various factors affecting the death squad phenomenon. Furthermore, first hand testimony was included from individuals who have had contact with squad members or their victims, and testimony of surviving victims. The analysis conducted on all information gathered has been disseminated throughout the various chapters of this thesis.

### Conclusions Reached

Death squads have a long history dating back to the beginnings of organized government. There is nothing to counter the conclusion that death squads will remain a viable

policy choice of many governments. Their methods of operation--torture, "disappearances" (see definitions, chapter 1), murder, and genocide--will continue unchallenged. Human rights groups have attempted in vain to raise the world conscience to the death squad phenomenon. Criminal justice organizations with international membership have not loudly condemned state terror conducted by member nations. Scholarly research is lacking on the specific death squad phenomenon. Moreover, research by the criminal justice community is nil.

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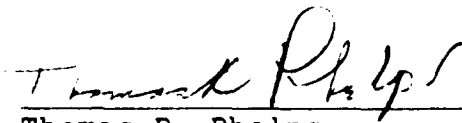
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